My Bark

Petit

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MY BARK

A SOUVENIR OF RETREATS GIVEN

BY

THE REV. P. ADOLPHE PETIT, S.J.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH BY

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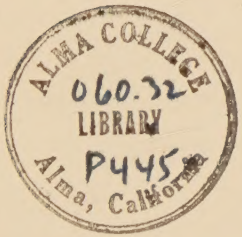

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TO MY READERS

I have spent a large part of my life in preaching the retreat of St. Ignatius to people in all walks and conditions of life:—to priests and religious, to the rich and the poor, to men of the world, to workingmen and women, and to children. Having myself witnessed the wonderful effects, and the miraculous conversions wrought through this book of the *Spiritual Exercises,* I appreciate and recognize its great value, and endeavor to use it on every possible occasion for the salvation of souls.

To priests, as a remembrance of my long ministry of more than fifty years in their midst, I leave two Latin works that have received the highest approbation, and which His Holiness Pius X has deigned to recommend to the clergy of the world.

TO MY READERS

To my other numerous spiritual children I should like to leave a similar souvenir of my apostolate. To them I dedicate the instructions of a retreat given to a religious community, leaving to each one the task of adapting them to his particular condition.

PREFACE

An old man of ninety years is about to set out upon an important voyage;—the journey homeward to eternity. He intends to make this voyage by sea, and before embarking sends a farewell to his friends in the form of a description of the bark that is to carry him to the port of eternity.

God grant that they in turn will one day embark upon the same vessel to rejoin their old friend in the harbor of eternal rest.

ADOLPH PETIT, S. J.

Tronchiennes,
January 1, 1912.

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FIRST INSTRUCTION

GENERAL IDEA OF A RETREAT

In preaching this retreat I wish to imitate my divine Master, who, in his instructions and discourses, made use of parables and comparisons, and with engaging simplicity taught divine truths. Like Him I am going, as far as possible, to group and condense the considerations around a comparison which will be the central idea of the whole retreat. This manner of treating the subject will, I hope, result in a good and fruitful retreat.

But before proposing this idea to you, I shall answer two questions:

1. What does it mean to make a retreat?
2. What dispositions of mind and heart must one bring to a retreat to make it fruitfully?

What Does It Mean to Make a Retreat?

Making a retreat is doing for one's soul what a prudent merchant does for his business. Every year he balances his books, examines his liabilities and assets, and sums up his gains and losses. He takes stock of his goods; discarding damaged articles and replacing them with good ones. If unsaleable goods are on hand, he buys no more of that kind or grade, but orders others; then, when everything has been gone over and put in order, he begins all over with renewed zeal. You are that merchant and you must take the time and conscientiously ask yourself if all is in order in your soul.

To make a retreat is to do for one's soul what the farmer does with his land. At a certain time every year his fields are examined, manured, furrowed, and the grain sown which will eventually yield the harvest. You are that farmer, you must cultivate the soil of your soul. You must nourish it, furrow it for the grain, and plant the seed of

christian virtues, in order that God may gather the harvest of salvation and sanctification which he recompenses with an eternity of glory and happiness.

Again, a retreat is doing for one's soul what the watchmaker does for a watch. He examines it thoroughly to see if the wheels and other parts are in order and if necessary, even takes it to pieces. He removes dust and rust and replaces pieces that are worn out or defective. Then he puts it together again, polishes it, and returns it like new to its owner. We are God's watches that often need thorough repairing. I am sent to help you to get rid of the dust and rust of your sins, to reform bad habits,—to regulate the watch and return it in good order to God, your Creator.

Lastly, making a retreat is doing for the soul what the architect does when he plans or constructs a perfect building. "We are the temples of God," says St. Paul. St. Augustine tells us we are bound to erect an

edifice worthy of him, and this we can do by means of a retreat.

With what Dispositions of Mind and Heart Should One Begin a Retreat?

First, you should be filled with profound gratitude to God, who in his goodness accords you the privilege of making a retreat. Secondly, you must have the spirit of recollection; perfect silence must be kept and a watch set upon all your senses, especially the imagination. In a word, be alone with your divine Master, His Holy Mother, St. Joseph, and your Guardian Angel in the house of your soul.

The third requirement is generosity. God will speak to you during these days, keep yourself in a disposition not only to listen, but to respond to His call with perfect docility. Refuse nothing He asks of you.

I will give you a comparison that may aid you to understand my meaning better.

A snail, a dog, and an eagle aim at reaching the top of a high mountain. The prog-

ress of the snail is so slow that he is greatly discouraged. The dog starts with a bound, but has no perseverance. The eagle soars to the summit where he hovers and circles at ease. Be like the eagle. From the beginning of the holy exercises, soar on the wings of generous impulses to the summit of God's mountain where you will hear His voice, and answer, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? . . . Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth." May this retreat be for each one of you the beginning of a new life. With Blessed John Berchmans, say: "Let others do what they will. I wish to become a great saint and in a short time with the help of God's Grace." And say that in all truth and earnestness. To insure the realization of these desires, put yourself under the protection of the Sacred Heart. Entreat Jesus to enlighten your mind with His divine light, to inflame your heart with the fire of His love, and to deign to direct our holy exercises.

And now I come to the central idea of our retreat, which has been suggested to me by the words of a hymn you often sing: *Ave Maris Stella*—"Hail Star of the Sea!" The Church, in thus addressing the Blessed Virgin, bids us consider the Christian in this world as a traveler on the ocean: and truly we are all traveling towards Eternity through difficulties, struggles, and sorrows. For each one of us, life is a stormy sea that must be crossed before reaching heaven. Each one has his ship to navigate. I consider all the ships before me, that is to say your souls, as a little flotilla of the Blessed Virgin. After the retreat, this little flotilla will put to sea and sail for the port of Eternity. It is here now in dock for a few days to be overhauled and have the most urgent repairs made; to be provided with the necessary gear and to be provisioned. I am the agent sent by God to superintend the work. Begin then the fitting out of your ship by equipping her with a Compass.

THE COMPASS

The navigator who undertakes a long voyage must be provided with a compass, an instrument in which a magnetic needle at the center always points to the North. This instrument enables the navigator to direct the ship in the exact course it is to follow. In spiritual navigation the compass is *the constant thought of our last end.* Hence, this is the first part of the equipment to be put in place. There is the compass of mankind in general, the compass of the Christian, and that of the religious.

MAN'S COMPASS

Man, being a reasonable being, should always bear in mind his last end, else he lives in vain. He must never forget that he was created to praise, love and serve God, and in so doing save his soul.

THE CHRISTIAN'S COMPASS

The Christian must always remember that

he is a child of God, a brother, co-heir, and witness of Jesus Christ.

God is our Father. Do we really regard him as such? What are our feelings; what is our conduct towards him? Our Divine Savior wished to become our elder brother, hence it is our duty to become like unto Him. Let us consider His Life, in order to see if ours is conformed to it. He loved poverty, humiliation, suffering. He was kind, patient, charitable. See Him at Nazareth, at Bethlehem, in the towns and provinces of Judea. Do we strive to resemble him?

Our Divine Savior conquered heaven for us at the price of His blood. Let us never lose sight of that blessed Eternity, where God awaits us, and let us bravely steer our bark towards the celestial shores.

To be a witness of Jesus Christ is to be a martyr, which is but another term for Christian. And as such, we should be ready to suffer every torment, even death itself, should God demand it.

THE COMPASS OF THE RELIGIOUS

As religious, we must strive for perfection and sanctity. In the beginning of my instruction, I recalled to you the words of Blessed John Berchmans: "I wish to become a great saint and in a short time." He died at the age of twenty-one and in that short span attained sanctity. Upon entering the religious life, we freely bind ourselves to strive for perfection and holiness. What is our present spiritual condition? To what degree of virtue have we thus far attained? Let us make a thorough self-examination and renew our fervor. We must keep our eyes on the compass. With the aid of Jesus and Mary we shall safely steer our ship, and like St. John Berchmans shall arrive at the blessed destination towards which we have directed our course.

SECOND INSTRUCTION

THE RUDDER

Besides the compass, a rudder is also an essential part of a boat. The compass indicates the route, the rudder gives the direction. The pilot, his eyes fixed upon the compass, directs the ship by means of the helm. This rudder is indispensable if one would steer a straight course to the desired port. In spiritual navigation, we have distinguished between the compass of mankind in general, the Christian compass, and that of the religious. We shall now examine the rudder and the manner in which it is used by these three classes of men.

God has created man a rational being. Therefore he has the obligation of using his reason in his conduct through life. He must exercise vigilance that neither impressions,

imagination, nor the passions may obscure the eye of his reason. Is it imperative to speak of these three causes which obscure man's spiritual vision? Alas! though religious, we are not always reasonable. We will examine now the three things that cause our ship to deviate from its course.

First, impressions. We often allow ourselves to be carried away by the impression of the moment. We are spoken to in a certain manner and all is well, another addresses us in a less amiable tone and immediately we are upset and everything seems wrong. Impressions often produce sad results and lead to do foolish things. Do not allow yourself to be influenced and led by impressions.

Second, imagination. How the imagination deceives and leads us astray! It is like a mirror. There are concave, convex, and flat mirrors. In the concave mirror things appear more beautiful than they are. Mirror globes are put in shop winds and gar-

dens for the reason that they reflect all objects to their advantage. Similarly, the imagination can make things appear to us more beautiful and desirable than they are in reality. Thus, for example, a nun carried away by her imagination, will look back upon the world she has left, and seeing it in its most alluring aspect, is filled with vain regrets. She will perhaps say to herself: "Had I not left it, I too could enjoy these pleasures, which after all are not forbidden."

The convex mirror produces exactly the opposite effect. It reflects things out of proportion. The smallest object that floats near your ship will seem to you a sea monster, a piece of wood assumes the proportions of a mountain. Thus can the imagination distort a trifling difficulty into appalling proportions. Then one gives up and becomes discouraged.

Lastly, there are flat mirrors, which reflect objects as they are. Even here the im-

agination can cause much trouble in making us see things in that mirror that do not in reality exist. When a cat looks into a mirror she thinks she sees an animal that resembles herself; if she approaches, the other does likewise, then enraged, she springs behind the mirror to seize the cause of her anger. She finds nothing, since she has seen only her own image. The imagination can lead us into similar delusions. A sister, who had committed a fault, was called and reproved by her superior. Astonished that the act was known, she successively accused her companions of having informed on her, only to learn that she had betrayed herself, the superior having seen and heard everything. This good sister will remind you of the cat in the mirror!

Let us be on our guard against the imagination, "that madman of the house," of which a saint has said: "If we wish to do a good deed we must begin by putting the lunatic in the street."

The third danger lies in our passions. This danger is less great among those consecrated to God; and yet, there was a traitor among the Apostles, and a passion was the cause of his fall, the low passion for money, the greed of gain.

THE RUDDER OF THE CHRISTIAN

To strengthen the rudder of the Christian, God has given it an iron support; this support is faith. It is by faith that a Christian guides his conduct through life. This rudder of the true Christian must be directed according to the principles of our Savior Himself revealed to St. Catherine of Siena. Faith and reason teach that nothing happens independently of the Will of God, or at least without His permission. An infinitely wise and perfect God must in everything propose to Himself an end, and this end must necessarily be Himself and His greater glory.

God is our Father; he loves each one of

us with an infinite love. In all that happens to us he has in view our greater good. You may perhaps be persecuted, exiled, deprived of your worldly possessions, and should this occur, believe me, God permits it for the greater good of your soul. We do not always realize these truths, since we see but the material aspect of things, but God, who knows all, knows better than we what is good for our soul. Abandon yourselves then with complete confidence to His Holy Will, be guided by faith and try to judge the events of life in the light of God's wisdom. Let not the future affright you, but in these troubled times, when God is so grievously offended, arm yourselves with courage, become generous, devoted, Apostolic souls, and thus will you call down the mercy of God upon mankind.

THE RUDDER OF THE RELIGIOUS

Faith gives to the rudder of the reason a supernatural support; it protects, more-

over, the rudder of the Christian by guiding aright his reason and safeguarding him against the weaknesses of human nature. The rudder of the religious is further secured against decay by protective covering which is peculiar to the religious state, namely, the vow of obedience. If we firmly hold our rudder thus protected we shall be safely guided to the port of salvation. Religious obedience possesses a marvelous power: one has only to follow its impulse and the rudder works automatically and with perfect surety.

Above all must you be faithful to the rules and live according to the spirit of your venerable Foundress, observing faithfully the constitution she has bequeathed to you. St. John Berchmans sanctified himself through the exact observance of his rules. I was in Rome at the time of his beatification and I prayed to him in the following manner: "My brother John, you have been beatified but you will never be canonized. Other

blessed martyrs will pass before you. You died young and did nothing extraordinary during your life." And yet, twenty years later, three beatified saints of the Society of Jesus were canonized, and among them was John Berchmans. His cause finished even before that of the others, and why? Because of his fidelity and obedience to the rule. The pupils of the Roman College testified on oath that they had never seen him transgress the rule in any detail.

The venerable Father de la Colombière, after making the exercises of St. Ignatius for thirty days, relates in a little book (Retreat of Father de la Colombière) the graces and lights God had vouchsafed him. When he came to make his resolutions, this is what he wrote: "In imitation of St. John Berchmans I will be faithful to all the requirements of the rule," and this was the conclusion of his retreat. Is it not an eloquent witness in behalf of obedience? Berchmans had not then been elevated to the altar, but

his reputation was world-wide because of his unfailing fidelity. It is related that a religious, seemingly in no wise different from others, received extraordinary graces from God; many sick who had recourse to him were cured. His superior asked him one day why he had been thus favored. Hesitatingly he replied: "Father, all I can tell you in explanation of these singular favors is that I conform my will always and in everything to the Will of God." "Seek no further," said his superior, "that reason suffices." You see the power of obedience and how it touches the heart of God. Oh! Keep yourselves intimately united to God by perfect submission to His Will, that you may thus manifest religious obedience.

THIRD INSTRUCTION

THE PILOT—CAUSES OF SHIPWRECK

The rôle of the pilot consists, not only in steering his ship by means of compass and rudder, but especially in avoiding obstacles that threaten to wreck it. It devolves upon each one of us to steer his soul as the pilot does his ship; and since we are constantly exposed to shipwreck on the stormy sea of life, we must know the dangers to be avoided and what to do in time of peril. I once asked a sea captain what were the usual causes of shipwreck. He replied, "First, storms; then reefs, collisions, dead calm, sand banks, and pirates." The same causes are responsible for shipwreck in spiritual navigation, and we, like brave seamen, in perilous situations, must act with courage and resource. The following instruction is

very important. I beg you to give it your entire attention.

STORMS

A storm at sea usually alarms the passengers. One man, however, must remain calm: the Captain. He fully realizes the danger and calmly takes the necessary precautions to insure the safety of his ship. If not far distant from port, he will try to put in and await fair weather. In spiritual navigation storms are difficulties, suffering, and every form of adversity. When these assail us, we should not be troubled, but courageously rise above the difficulty, regarding it with the eyes of faith. More fortunate than the navigators of this world, we have always an assured port of refuge. This port is the Heart of Jesus. Even men of the world understand this truth; among them are many who calmly rely upon God in the midst of great agitation. I once experienced an admirable example of this trust

in God. At a retreat, a gentleman well known in the best society came to me for advice. "Father," said he, "I am in great trouble! My mother, an excellent woman, but most peculiar, demands that I give her $20,000. I do not owe it to her. Notwithstanding, the affair has gone so far that she has put it in the hands of a lawyer and the trial comes up during my retreat. I have every reason to be apprehensive; and yet, I am perfectly calm. I have placed the affair in the Heart of Jesus; there I seek refuge. If I gain the suit, I will thank Him; if I lose it, I will thank Him still; at present I think only of my retreat." Two days after his departure he wrote to me: "Father, I have lost my suit, and when told of the verdict, I thanked God. I went at once to see my mother taking with me the $20,000. I embraced her saying: 'Mother, nothing will be changed in our feelings; we love each other and the past is forgotten.'" Here we have an admirable example from a man of

the world, who, unlike ourselves, had not left all things to devote himself to the service of God. He understood what it means to confide all things to the Heart of Jesus. Let us also resolve to seek refuge in that safe port during the storms of life.

REEFS

Navigators frequently encounter reefs. The captain who studies his chart knows their whereabouts and takes every precaution to avoid them. However, should he be blown out of his course, and find himself in a fog among reefs, he will advance most cautiously: he will slow down and even stop the ship to take soundings and try to find a way where he can pass without damage to his vessel. Who will deny that upon the ocean of the world we also encounter reefs and breakers? by which I mean temptations from the devil, the world, and alas! from our own heart. A temptation, however, is an occasion of merit, so long as we do not yield

our consent; but beware of playing with a temptation or lending an ear to the tempter. To parley with temptation is to invite a fall. Let us see how a skillful pilot manages his ship. He does not risk going near the reefs, but keeps as far away as possible, wishing to avoid even the slightest damage. With regard to temptation, we must act as we should act were a spark to fall upon our clothing. The devil will fill our imagination with dangerous thoughts; we must reply by making an act of love of God. He will instantly leave us in peace, seeing that his attacks but double our merits.

Suppose I am in my room writing a letter or a sermon. The devil suggests an evil thought to me. I reply: "Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, I love you," and continue writing. "What a queer man is this Father Petit," he will say to himself. "Every time I tempt him he does not deign to notice me but invokes Jesus and Mary. It is not for this I have come here!" And then, humil-

iated by his continued defeats, he flees, leaving me happier inasmuch as I have again proved my love of God.

Thus must we conduct ourselves in the midst of temptation. I can give you no better counsel than this. Many people, both religious and lay, have thanked me for teaching them how to triumph over the demon. This simple method delivers one at once from all temptation. We can once and for all make a pact with Our Lord, that every time we say to him, "My Jesus, I love Thee" we wish to signify that we would rather die than willingly offend Him even by a single venial sin.

COLLISIONS

These are especially to be feared in a fog, when ships cannot be seen until they are almost upon each other. Hence it is easily understood how collisions occur with even most careful navigators. Collisions in religious life are coldness, jealousies, bitterness, etc., often but the result of misunder-

standings which are a sort of fog. Under cover of this darkness we get false ideas and act accordingly. Such collisions can be avoided by seeking light and a cordial, frank understanding. Why do we not take every precaution as does the tried pilot? In the port of Ostend a cannon is fired every time a vessel goes out in a fog. It is certain we could avoid much unpleasantness if we would act with more thought. I advise every superior never to condemn anyone without hearing what he has to say. "He who hears only one bell hears only one sound." One can easily be mislead in judging by one report. The person who reports may do so with the best intentions; but is he correctly informed? Do not fear to get every possible light when there is question between a superior and inferior, or between inferiors themselves. Always explain yourself frankly, dissipate all misunderstandings, and you will avoid collisions.

DEAD CALM

A dead calm is one of the most helpless situations in which a captain of a sailing vessel can find himself. See that vessel lying motionless in mid-ocean; not the faintest breeze fills its sails, and thus it will perhaps remain for days and weeks. The food supply is running low and the poor sailors are confronted with the horrible perspective of starving. Sadder still is the spiritual dead calm, and unless we act quickly and rouse ourselves, death soon follows. Never remain in this state: as soon as you feel lethargy coming upon you, use every means to shake it off. A simple remedy, and one within reach of all, is to apply oneself to some exercise of piety, if only to make carefully the Sign of the Cross. As to the causes of tepidity, we shall speak about them later on.

SAND BANKS

Here again is a danger that demands the full attention of the pilot. If he fails to lo-

cate and avoid these masses of hidden sand, his vessel will be stranded which may mean the loss of the ship and perhaps of the lives of the officers and crew. In any case it will have to be refloated, a difficult operation accompanied by exasperating delays.

We must find out the obstacles that impede our spiritual progress. These are principally: faults we are not fully determined to correct; inordinate affections we are not courageous enough to sacrifice, and failure to open our heart to our confessor or superior. Remember that it often requires greater strength of soul to root out a fault than, upon the spur of the moment, to perform an heroic act.

PIRATES

Another danger lies in wait for us—pirates; but as this subject requires more lengthy development, I will speak about it in our next instruction.

FOURTH INSTRUCTION

PIRATES—SIN

Formerly pirates were very much feared, and not without reason. When ships loaded with merchandise, left port, other vessels were often seen hovering in the distance. The pirates aboard those vessels were preparing to attack the merchantman and capture its cargo. They swooped down upon the ship when it least expected an attack, not stopping at murder to obtain the treasure. Brave and well-armed, the corsairs were nearly always victorious. In our day no such danger threatens the mariner. In naval battle, however, there are other things to be feared, bombs, shells and other murderous machines that are fired from a distance upon the enemy's fleet. Men-of-war are

thus riddled with cannon balls and frequently sunk.

In the spiritual combat, we also have formidable enemies to fear who fire upon us with bombs and shells. The devil with his temptations, the world with its seductions, and the covetousness of our own heart. But we have an advantage the mariner has not: we can always prevent the bombs from bursting. In fact they cannot explode without our consent. When we consent, then, and then only, do we sin. *Sin,* is the great evil, the enemy who gives the death stroke to the soul.

Let us ask ourselves, then, what must be our attitude with regard to sin. We must hate it, fear it, and avoid it. If a battle-ship has an invulnerable armor, it fears neither bombs nor cannon. The buckler with which we can always protect ourselves is horror of sin. But to have a true horror of sin we must see how imperative it is to hate, fear, and avoid it.

HATRED OF SIN

Let us consider the fatal consequences of sin in the fall of the Angels. They were splendid images of the perfections of God: the *chef-d'œuvre* of Creation. They abused their liberty, revolted against their Sovereign, and were instantly cast into hell.

Our first parents were also created in the image and likeness of God, and were placed in a paradise of delights: they held intercourse with their Creator and were exempt from suffering and death. But they transgressed the one command by which God wished to prove their fidelity, and at one fell stroke lost both the life of the soul and that of the body, and dragged out a miserable existence here below, subject to sorrow and suffering.

And lastly, see the sad effects of this accursed sin in our own souls. By mortal sin we lose sanctifying grace and all our acquired merits, and become abhorrent in the

sight of God. Should this not suffice to make us hate sin?

FEAR SIN

We must fear sin always. Although I find myself in the presence of children of God, nevertheless, following the example of St. Ignatius, I must speak of mortal sin. The fear of mortal sin may be very strong in souls consecrated to God, but it can diminish, nay completely disappear. Hence it is necessary from time to time to revive this wholesome fear, and a retreat is a most favorable time for doing so.

AVOID SIN

We can be drawn into sin little by little and almost unconsciously. Especially is tepidity the fatal declivity which inevitably ends in sin. Hence we must seek the cause of this great evil and uproot it from our heart.

The causes of tepidity are, first, carelessness in our spiritual exercises. These exer-

cises constitute an important duty which cannot be discharged with too much care and attention. Secondly, too great indulgence of the senses. We want to see, to read, and to hear everything, not stopping even at dangerous thoughts and imaginings. How, then, is it possible not to fall? Again, ease and comfort. Upon leaving the world we renounced the good things of life. Our life then should be a continued mortification; we must shun that which satisfies the body and pleases the senses, and willingly accept poverty and privations. The spirit of criticism is another cause of tepidity and sin. Especially with regard to our superiors, let us beware of criticism. Fear, above all things, that mania of wanting to know and repeat everything. This tendency is but a species of secret pride, the cause of many faults. Lastly, too many outside occupations. Beware of too many outside interests, even of good works. Zealous and active souls are naturally exposed to this danger. They de-

vote themselves with untiring zeal to every kind of work for the salvation of their neighbor, often neglecting their own. Remember that charity begins at home. We have reason to tremble when we neglect our own soul in order to help others. Let us not be like a cistern from which men draw fresh water, while the bottom is filled with slime. Often we meet people who speak admirably of God to others, and keep nothing of it for themselves. Avoid being like cisterns, or like canals that carry water and retain none of it. Resemble rather pure vases of crystal filled with limpid water, yet giving only of their abundance. What we are ourselves is more eloquent for good than what we say or do.

Good example is a powerful sermon. If you wish to make others practice a virtue, begin by cultivating that virtue yourself. Unfortunately, the contrary often happens, as the following anecdote will show: A good, pious priest was wont to visit the sick

in his parish, exhorting them to practice patience. His sacristan usually accompanied him on these visits. One day the priest himself fell ill, and to the astonishment of everyone was impatient to a trying degree. The sacristan could not refrain from expressing his surprise that he who had so eloquently exhorted others to patience should fail so signally himself. The priest, greatly embarrassed, replied: "Listen, my friend, it is one thing to be beside a sick bed, another to be in it." Our Lord said: "Physician cure thyself." Endeavor at all times to give a good example and rest assured that the more closely united you are to God, the more surely will your works be blessed.

Failure to open our heart is a fault that can completely arrest our progress in the spiritual life. I once preached a retreat to a Bishop and numerous priests. Seated near the Bishop was a priest who at one time was celebrated for his zeal. In later years, however, he had not been heard of, no one

knew why. The instruction that day was upon tepidity; and when I spoke of the necessity of opening one's heart, I saw tears in his eyes and wondered what had touched him. After the instruction he followed me into the sacristy, and falling upon my neck, confided to me a trouble of long standing, that he had never told to anyone. This was what had arrested him in his zeal for good. It was neither a fault nor a sin, but only a trial that sufficed to still his life of activity. He left me in a happy frame of mind, saying he was ready to die, and even desired death. Two days later a telegram arrived announcing his death. To the Bishop who was with me at the time, I related what happened during the retreat, and together we thanked God for His mercy to that afflicted soul. You see what can happen if we fail to open our heart when we are struggling with trials and temptations.

You are now convinced that we must ever be on our guard against the many pirates

that infest the spiritual world. The buckler which will save us is horror of sin. If through weakness and misfortune we fall into the power of the enemy, let us hasten to extricate ourselves by a good Confession. A priest once passing through a town, and hearing that a friend had received the last Sacraments, hastened to his bedside to give him his blessing. At the sight of the priest, the sick man became troubled and cried out: "Father, God has sent you; I am dying in a state of mortal sin. I have just received the last Sacraments without declaring a mortal sin, quickly absolve me, I beg you." The absolution was given, but what folly to conceal a sin through shame or fear!

I will finish this meditation by asking you to make three resolutions.

First, if you have at any time committed grievous or willful venial sins, ask God once more to pardon you, and renew your resolution not to sin again.

Secondly, resolve to open your heart in the

confession you are about to make, especially if anything troubles your conscience. The confession of the retreat is often the starting point of a new life.

The last resolution I propose is the Oath of the Martyrs. Say to God that you would rather die and suffer every torture than to offend Him mortally; and aspiring even higher, protest from the bottom of your heart that you prefer death rather than commit a single venial sin.

FIFTH INSTRUCTION

PIRATES—OUR LAST END

Pirates so menace our spiritual welfare that I return once more to the subject to put you on your guard against them. We have seen that we can protect ourselves against their attacks with the armor of hatred of sin. We have still another powerful weapon with which to defend our frail bark; it is the thought of our last end. The Holy Ghost tells us: "Remember your last end and you will never sin." In this meditation let us consider the two ends from which there is no escape,—death and judgment.

DEATH

What is death, viewed with the eyes of Faith? It is the fruit of sin. Death is a punishment for the sin of our first parents.

When we look upon a dead body about to be consigned to the grave, we say to ourselves: "O sin, behold thy work!"

The Fathers of the Church called death the doorkeeper of Eternity. Let us imagine a soul departing this life. Immediately after the private judgment it finds itself before a mysterious being who holds three keys in his hand. Behind him are three doors. If the soul is condemned to hell, the door on the left opens, and the soul is precipitated into the bottomless pit. If purgatory is the sentence, the middle door is opened and the soul enters, filled with resignation and eager to purify itself. But should the sentence bear the word "Heaven," the being, until then impassive, smiles sweetly and, upon opening the door on the right, the radiant soul enters into Paradise. It depends upon ourselves to which place we shall be sentenced.

Death is universal. Whether we like it or not, we must one day leave all things. Do not then indulge in inordinate affections for

creatures, but sever the bonds that bind you to the earth. Endeavor to follow the advice of a venerable servant of God: "to efface ourselves and diminish our wants always more and more." What an excellent thing! There are people who strive ever to enrich themselves, to increase what they already possess. I do not speak of sinful accumulation of wealth, but of the legitimate possession of the things of earth. Is this the road that leads to heaven? Most certainly not, but in diminishing worldly possessions, and in cultivating poverty of spirit, one is freer to go to God. I once assisted at the death-bed of a friend, a multi-millionaire, and asked him if he still had any worldly attachments. "Father," he replied, "I am attached to one thing only, the will of God." Happy are those who die in such a disposition! It is a striking example even for us religious who have left all things for God. But we can confidently await the fulfillment of the divine promise: "He who

has left home, brothers, sisters, father, and mother and lands for my sake, will receive a hundredfold in this world and life everlasting."

Lastly, death is the end of all suffering: and in this thought we can find consolation when our end comes. Death is the beloved messenger who comes to conduct us to our heavenly home. With what joy the saints welcomed death! Often have I witnessed and been profoundly moved by this joyous welcome of death. I remember the edifying death of a lady, who, upon my advice, had consecrated her life to good works. When she felt death approaching, she asked her husband to send for me. Upon entering her room, I was conscious of an atmosphere of sanctity. The dying woman, her face transfigured with joy, said to me: "Father, I have not sent for you to confess my sins, for I have received all the sacraments and am ready to appear before God. I have sent for you to thank you. Some

years ago you interested me in the sick and the poor; you pointed out to me the way in which I have since walked without stumbling. Now I am dying, and I am happy to go to God. Be it life or death, I ask only that His will be done. Forgive me for bringing you from so far, but I felt I must thank you from my heart for what you have done for me." I wept through emotion. Two days later her husband wrote me: "My wife has just died, she suffered much, but her patience and resignation were admirable. Her last words were: 'My God I offer Thee the sacrifice of my life for the sinner Father Petit wishes to convert.' " A short time afterwards, a conversion took place which I attribute to her prayers and the sacrifice of her life.

Who can greet death as a beloved messenger? First, those who have never lost God's grace through mortal sin, and these are more numerous than one thinks. Secondly, those who have never committed de-

liberate venial sins; we meet many who are in this category. Cardinal Bellarmin, whose life was crowded with divers works and affairs of grave importance, said upon his deathbed that he had never committed a deliberate venial sin. Another class of Christians who can meet death unflinchingly, those who have led useful lives and work for God's glory, and still another, those who have made a generous sacrifice to God. Parents who courageously and willingly give up their children when God calls them to the religious life are greatly consoled at the hour of death; and with greater reason can this be said of children who have left all things at the call of God. At the hour of death our Savior fulfills the wonderful promises he has made which assure the possession of eternal life. Death, looked at with the eyes of faith, becomes a light, a consolation, and an encouragement.

JUDGMENT

We shall be judged immediately after death by Jesus Christ, our judge. Already here below we can know in advance what will be His attitude toward us: the matter upon which judgment will be passed and the sentence. God knows all and nothing is hidden from him. Being infinitely perfect he must prosecute and punish the evil He finds in us. After death begins the reign of justice. He is God; hence a just Judge who can neither be swayed nor bought by gifts nor promises. He is God, hence all powerful; we can not escape his avenging hand. He is God, hence independent of all other judges, and from his sentence there is no appeal. But this Judge whom we must then dread, we can now conciliate, by loving Him. He can not resist love. Now is the time of mercy; then will be the reign of justice. Oh, let us love God with all our heart, for in loving Him we touch His heart and incline Him

to mercy. I should not want to be judged by anyone save God! We must, however, love what He loves. He loved His mother and foster-father St. Joseph, the Church his Spouse, and the Angels and Saints, his dear ones, the poor, children, and even his enemies, the sinners. We must love these last for His sake and pray for them as He wishes us to do.

The matter upon which judgment will be passed is our life. In this ensemble is much that merits punishment, and much that will be rewarded. Each day we can diminish the part that is subject to chastisement and augment the merits that will be recompensed. Our souls must be purified by a good confession, true contrition, and love of God. Let us make worthy fruits of penitence, since all that has been expiated here below will not be counted against us in the world to come. But this is not enough. We must constantly enrich our cargo with good works. Actions, to be meritorious, must

be performed in the state of grace and with a pure intention.

The Sovereign Judge will bid some to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; and others He will precipitate into eternal fire. And for what manner of men are these two sentences reserved? Our Savior tells us in plain words: "Come, ye blessed of my Father, possess the Kingdom which has been prepared for you since the beginning of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me to drink, naked and you clothed me, a stranger and you took me in, I was sick and you nursed me, in prison and you visited me."—"But Lord, when have I seen you hungry, thirsty, when without shelter, naked, sick and in prison and given you aid?" And the Savior will reply: "Amen, I say unto you, so often as you have done this to the least of my brethren, you have done it unto me." Then turning to the wicked He will say: "Depart from me, accursed, into ever-

lasting fire, which has been prepared for the devil and his Angels. For I was hungry and you gave me not to eat. I was thirsty and you gave me not to drink, I was homeless and you took me not in, I was naked and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not visit me." They also will reply: "Lord, when did we see you hungry and thirsty or homeless and naked, or ill and in prison, and we did not assist you?" And the Lord will say: "Amen, I say to you, every time that you refused succor to the least of my little ones, you refused to succor me." (Matt. 25.)

Listen to the voice of the divine Master, while there is yet time.

SIXTH INSTRUCTION

THE OARS

Having examined the causes of shipwreck, the precautions to be taken and the means to avoid disaster, we will now continue the fitting out of our boat. The compass and rudder are in place, the next thing is to ship the oars; now, more than ever are they necessary in spiritual navigation. The four oars of the spiritual life are:—general and particular examination, confession, and mortification.

Examination of conscience is an excellent, nay a necessary means of assuring our progress in the way of perfection. Twice a day, at noon and again in the evening, we make a quarter of an hour's examination. We learned in the novitiate how to make both a general and a particular examination; but

nevertheless we need at times to renew our fervor. The evil spirit employs every means and all his artifice to convince us of the futility of pious exercises, and alas! he but too often succeeds—we have all had this sad experience. If we carefully review our past life, we shall see that we minimized the practice of examining the conscience, and yet, it is of the greatest importance.

Listen to what the author of the *Spiritual Exercises* says about examination of conscience. In the early days of our Society, our fathers were few in number, scarcely sufficient for the Apostolic work demanded of them, and often pressed for time in which to make their spiritual exercises. They spoke about it to St. Ignatius, and this is what he replied: "In working for the salvation of souls, you are accomplishing the Will of God, hence do not be disturbed, only promise me never to neglect your examination at noon and in the evening. This exercise of piety I require of you." He knew

well how necessary examination of conscience is for those who aspire to self-knowledge and earnestly desire to correct their faults and failings. We all know that the examination of conscience comprises five points. First, we must thank God for all the favors he has conferred upon us. We must thank Him with great fervor and from our heart for the grace of redemption, for our vocation, for daily communion, and for all particular graces. Second, we must humbly beg for light to know our sins, and grace to detest them, as well as all negligence in His divine service. Third, we must take a rapid survey of our actions since our last examination. It is not difficult to follow the different actions of the day, retiring at night, rising in the morning, meditation, mass, communion, study, breakfast, visits to the Blessed Sacrament, etc. We must ask ourselves how we have discharged these various duties? Did I rise promptly and piously? Did I follow the prescribed method of medi-

tation and give it my full attention? Did I make practical resolutions for the day? We see at once in what we have failed. This exercise is neither long nor difficult. Fourth, we must make an act of sincere and heartfelt repentance, confident of obtaining pardon from God. And lastly, we must make a resolution never more to offend God and finish by resolving to be more fervent and courageous.

THE PARTICULAR EXAMINATION

The object of the particular examination of conscience is to correct a grave fault or to cultivate certain virtues, and if carefully and faithfully made, it accomplishes great results. It is moreover a powerful weapon against the enemy both from within and without. But to wield this weapon successfully requires exactitude and perseverance. An exact account must be kept, and all victories and defeats faithfully noted down. In speaking of the particular examination I

shall cite an example. I once knew a business-man who was a very pious Christian. During one of his visits he confided to me that he was extremely unhappy. This greatly astonished me, for he seemed to possess everything his heart could desire. "Father," he said, with tears in his eyes, "I have several children and many workmen; I love them, and yet I am beloved neither by my children nor by the men in my employ, and this causes me great unhappiness." I asked him if he knew the reason for this lack of affection. "I think I do," he replied; "I have a violent temper." I had before me several little books for the particular examination of conscience. I offered him one, explaining at the same time how it was to be used. He left, taking it with him. Three months later he returned and gave me the book. Up to this time he was the most undisciplined of men, and although he went weekly to confession he did not correct his ungovernable temper. I examined the

exercise book. The first morning ten exhibitions of temper; in the afternoon about as many, at the end of the month there was a total of at least 300 faults of temper. The second month they were reduced by half and the third month to a quarter. Some time after I again examined the book and was happy to see that the bursts of temper were continuing to diminish. The last page filled me with joy. Not one single fit of temper was recorded. Shortly after he fell ill and died after a year of cruel suffering. I went to pray beside his bier, and the nun who had nursed him said to me: "Father, that man was a saint!"—"What reason have you for thinking so?" I asked. "He suffered indescribable tortures for more than a year, and never complained or gave the least sign of impatience."—"Sister, he was a man of most violent temper, and he corrected it through particular examinations of conscience." Let us try to profit by his example.

We have said that the particular examination should be directed to uprooting a particular fault or cultivating a particular virtue. Many people seem not to know how to examine themselves when they have no very serious or glaring faults to correct. Religious of this class are advised to take three subjects for examination and devote a month to each. The first month, the exercises of piety; the second month, a point of the rule; and the third month, charity. At the end of the third month, begin again in exactly the same order. I think in reviewing our religious duties, the principal points of the rule, and what regards charity, we shall accomplish a useful work.

CONFESSION

Confession is one of God's most inestimable gifts. In confessing our sins we seek an ever increasing purity of heart, that we may thereby please God and be more intimately united to him. Absolution is an-

other precious gift, by which God gives not only an increase of sanctifying grace, but also actual graces which enable us to avoid sin in the future. And yet, many make confession a veritable torture. Why? Either they imagine that every minute fault or failing should be confessed, or they lose all sense of proportion in their examination of conscience, not distinguishing between mortal and venial sins. Let such persons learn once and for all that mortal sin alone is subject-matter for confession. Confession of deliberate venial sin is, however, recommended. A sin is not mortal unless the matter involved is grave, and one is aware of its gravity at the moment, and commits the act deliberately and with full consent. An upright man knows at once if he has committed a mortal sin. A familiar example may aid you to understand the question better. I am in my cell quietly working. You enter and say to me: "How many flies have you in your room, Father!" "Flies!

I have not remarked them." "Oh! and mice, too, and you tell me you have not noticed them?" "That may be so, but they have not disturbed me." Should a dog enter, I would get up and put him out; and supposing a lion came in, do you think I would remain quietly in my chair? Most certainly not; I would flee from the room calling for help! My children, the flies are the thousand imperfections we fall into daily. The sign of the cross made with holy water and accompanied by an act of contrition effaces them. The mice are venial sins committed more or less deliberately. As to the dog, needless to say, when a grave sin deliberately enters your soul, you do not have to search long before finding it. And should a lion bound in, then you would be seized with terror and call for help. This help is confession. Hence it is useless to torment yourself. You have but to confess simply, sincerely, and briefly, and make an act of contrition. Thus will you obtain new

graces and will feel yourself strengthened and helped. In a word, confession is an excellent oar, with which you will make great spiritual headway.

SPONTANEOUS MORTIFICATION

I am not speaking here of deliberate mortifications planned in advance, but of such as are made spontaneously without constraint and for the love of God. A thousand little sacrifices are within our reach which rejoice the heart of God and give happiness to our heart. These sacrifices obtain, moreover, many precious graces, *e. g.,* the conversion of a friend, who has heretofore resisted our many prayers. Children understand these little mortifications, and by means of them often correct their faults. I know of a child eight or nine years of age, who was not only willful, but weak in character and lazy. His parents placed him in a boarding-school, hoping that experienced teachers would be able to improve his char-

acter. It was the custom in that college to confide each young boy to the care of one of the older students. The one to whom this particular boy was entrusted assumed his task most seriously. He observed his young charge and found that he was swayed by two affections: love of Jesus and love of chocolates. The young director determined to make use of this discovery to reform the boy's character. The following Friday he gave him a piece of chocolate, telling him at the same time that the day was consecrated to Our Savior's passion, and he would greatly please Our Lord if he refrained from eating it, but that he was free to do as he pleased. Evening came and the boy produced his chocolate intact. He admitted that he had repeatedly put it to his mouth, but each time resisted the temptation. The trial was repeated on succeeding Fridays, and with renewed success. These little mortifications had a salutary effect upon his entire conduct and reformed his soul. Not

only did his faults disappear, but he exhibited strength and energy under difficult circumstances. When he returned home at Easter, his parents were astonished at the change that had taken place.

I shall give you another familiar example. One of our Fathers fell ill while visiting his parents, and my superior sent me to look after him. The family was about to start on a journey. I remarked a little boy, about eight years of age, busy packing trunks and making himself generally useful. "My boy," I said to him, "this work is too hard for you, let the servants attend to it." "Father," he replied, "I do this to please my Mamma." At dinner I noticed as each dish was handed to the child who was seated opposite his Mother, he looked first at her before helping himself, and the mother lifted one, two, or three fingers. He then took the indicated number of cakes or fruit. This method of discipline interested me, and after dinner I said to my hostess: "It

seems to me, Madame, you have a singularly obedient and virtuous child." "Yes, Father, he is my consolation. Since his infancy I have tried to make him know and love God, and without forcing him, have urged him to make little sacrifices. One Christmas when he was only two and a half years old, I told him of the poverty of our dear Lord in the stable at Bethlehem. 'Mamma,' he cried, 'may I not give my bed to the Infant Savior?' 'That would be no privation for you, for if you give your bed, Mamma will get you another; but if you like, give your toys to the poor children; in doing so you will give them to the Infant Jesus.' He went at once to fetch his toys and brought them all except a rubber cat he dearly loved. I said: 'You may keep them all if you wish, no one forces you to give them.' He kept the cat and gave the rest. That evening at night prayers, when the household, including the servants, were assembled, I found him kneeling next to me

and noticed he had something hidden in his dress. At the examination of conscience he drew it forth and gave it to me saying: 'I give this also.' It was the cat. Then in transports of joy he clapped his little hands exclaiming: 'I have given *everything* to the Infant Jesus.' We were all moved to tears! From that hour his piety has never diminished. He edifies the whole household and is visibly blessed by God." Here you have a true example of spontaneous mortification practiced by a little child.

I would like also to relate an example taken from the life of Father de Clorivière. That excellent priest belonged to the Society of Jesus at the time of its suppression in 1783 and its reëstablishment in 1814. During those troubled times he spent several years at Liége with a brother, who provided for his needs. Ever seeking the good of souls, he made the acquaintance of a retired captain who had abandoned the practice of his religion. The officer fell ill of an in-

curable malady and was frequently visited by the priest. During one of these visits, Father Clorivière spoke to him about confession. The invalid was very angry and said if that word was mentioned again he would be obliged to ask the priest to discontinue his visits. However, not long after the good Father again returned to the charge, and was in consequence forbidden the house. During his daily walks he had the habit of talking out aloud to himself, asking questions and answering them. That day a passer-by heard him say: "Well, Father Clorivière, here you are; you cannot convert this soul, and yet the end is approaching. Let me see what you can do. Ah! I have it, you enjoy your after-dinner coffee. You will deny yourself to-day to obtain the salvation of the Captain's soul," and he gleefully rubbed his hands. In spite of his brother's insistence, he refused his usual cup of coffee, and just at that moment the door-bell rang and a messenger entered,

saying a priest was wanted at a certain number and street. "That is where my friend the Captain lives," exclaimed the priest and hurried off. As he entered the room, the officer said to him: "Father, I cannot account for what has happened, but a few moments ago the thought came to me to confess my sins, and I cannot get rid of the idea. Will you hear my confession?" The little act of mortification had touched God's heart and obtained the long-desired conversion. It was not a big thing but nothing is small that is done for our Divine Master. Often make small sacrifices for the Sacred Heart of Jesus, for His Holy Mother, and for St. Joseph, to obtain the salvation of a soul or some needed grace for yourself. Such sacrifices bring happiness and advance us in virtue.

Now, you have your four oars, namely: the two examinations of conscience, confession, and spontaneous acts of mortification. You have always known these things, but my ob-

ject in speaking to you about them is to make you esteem them more highly, and if you perform these exercises with zeal they will produce in your soul abundant fruit.

SEVENTH INSTRUCTION

THE SAILS

A ship under full sail is a beautiful sight, but the sails are not merely ornamental. When they are filled with a favorable wind, the ship rides the waves until it arrives safely in port. In the spiritual life, sails are the exercises of piety. The favorable wind is God's grace. This grace is absolutely necessary for us, and it is given liberally if we but ask for it. We have many spiritual exercises which fill our day and merit divine help. These exercises are divided into two classes, vocal and mental prayer. We have meditation, mass, communion, office, examination of conscience, morning and evening prayers in the chapel, and the rosary, and still others which vary according to the rules of the different institutions. It is not my intention to add to

your prayers, but to urge you to say with greater fervor those already imposed. Prayer requires recollection, attention, fervor, and confidence.

RECOLLECTION

We often fail to be properly recollected at prayer because of insufficient preparation. We come to our exercises of piety with minds preoccupied by a thousand thoughts and worries. Naturally, these thoughts accompany and disturb us during prayer. Hence we must begin by putting them aside and separating ourselves completely from the things of this world. First put yourself in the presence of God. Reflect what you are about to do, and your prayers will be fruitful, easy, and consoling.

ATTENTION

To avoid saying your prayers mechanically, dwell upon the sense of the words you are pronouncing. I have heard a parrot re-

cite the "Hail Mary," but not knowing what he said, it was not a prayer. Alas! do we not sometimes resemble a parrot in our prayers?

FERVOR

If we remember that we are in the presence of the Sovereign Majesty, our prayers will be more fervent. During meditation especially realize that God deigns to come to us and is ever ready to listen to our supplications. When reciting the divine office, try to realize the beauty of the prayers you are saying; they are the divine praises which we sing with the angels. In fact, all our religious exercises are an enduring intercourse between heaven and ourselves. Should not such thoughts excite fervor?

CONFIDENCE

Surely it is because we lack confidence that we do not obtain that for which we pray. God asks for our confidence, and what has He not done to merit it? He grants our

prayers when we have faith in His word. If sometimes He seems to turn a deaf ear, it is perhaps because what we ask for is not for our good, or He holds some greater gift in reserve. St. Gertrude complained to Our Lord that she had prayed in vain for a certain favor for another person. The Divine Master replied: "Suppose a child asked his father for a farthing, and the father replied: 'My son, you will not make good use of the farthing, but here is a gold piece that I will set aside for you, and each time you ask for a farthing, I will add another gold piece to it!" Did not the father grant the child's prayer? Without doubt, even to giving much more than was asked for. "In like manner," said Our Lord, "what that person asked of me was not good for her, but I am keeping in reserve a greater grace, which I will bestow upon her at the proper time."

And so it is with us. We must have complete confidence in God and leave it to Him

to grant our prayers in whatever manner He deems best for our eternal welfare. Moreover, how can He be disposed to hear our prayers if we think He does not listen to us? Could we touch the heart of a human benefactor if we said to him: "I ask you for this favor, but I know you will not grant it!" I admire the reply of an old woman who was asked by her Bishop if she prayed to God with confidence. "Monsignor, I believe that to ask is to receive." Had we such faith, what graces should we not obtain? We are too easily discouraged. Let us remember the example the Savior gives us in the Gospel. A man wakens his friend to ask for three loaves of bread, and obtains them by sheer importunity. Pray with perseverance and fear not to importune God, for nothing is more pleasing to Him. He is ready even to perform miracles to satisfy our desires. "Had you faith, and said to the mountain, remove from there and fling yourself into the sea, it would be done; all

that you ask with faith shall be given unto you." Now I shall speak to you of our main sail, which gives greater speed to our Spiritual Ship. It is heartfelt prayer and intimacy with Christ. It is difficult for us to think of God as a friend, and to address him as such; and yet he is our best, our only true friend. We should endeavor to be more intimately united to him. In what does the intercourse between friend and friend consist? We share everything with a true friend, our sorrows and joys, and treat him with the utmost confidence. Let this be our attitude towards God, who loves us and asks for our love that He may be more closely united to us.

I once had a wealthy friend who devoted his life to good works. I said to him one day: "We are supposed to be devoted to each other, and we are, but I must say that your friendship for me is not what I hoped it would be. The first time I tried to interest you in good works you received me most

cordially, and gave me most generously out of your abundance. The second time your donation was less generous, and I said to myself: If this goes on, I shall soon receive nothing at all. The third time I came, I was told you had a headache and could not see me. The fourth time, that you were not at home, which was not true for I saw you through the window. I turned away, my priestly heart was saddened, and I asked myself where I could find a friend always ready to listen to me and help me. This friend I have now found. He is richer than you, more intelligent, more generous, and never absent. He is ever ready to receive me and His purse is always open. His only reproach is that I do not come often enough, nor ask enough."—"And who is this friend?" asked my amazed interlocutor. "Is it possible you do not know him?" I replied. "It is Jesus in the tabernacle. Try yourself to find out who is your best friend." The Count reflected a few moments and then

went directly to the Bishop to ask permission to keep the Blessed Sacrament in the chapel of his Château. Having obtained the favor, his greatest happiness was to visit his Divine Master often and taste the joy of having found a true friend. Do then as Our Lord bids, giving yourself with entire confidence to His love. Then you will understand the happiness of this familiar intercourse, this life of union with Him, which is a paradise upon earth. And what I say of union with God I can say with equal fervor of our relations with His Blessed Mother, St. Joseph, and our Guardian Angel. There must be perfect abandonment, intimacy, and holy familiarity. You understand what I mean. You cherish images representing the hearts of Jesus and Mary and inscribed with the words: "All my confidence is in thee." God grant it may be thus with you, and that this meditation may be for you the beginning of a new life,—a life of more intimate union with the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

EIGHTH INSTRUCTION

THE FLAG

The flag is the ensign that flies from the stern of a vessel and indicates the nation to which it belongs. Some flags are composed of several emblems; but usually they are formed of bands of different colors. What will be our flag and what emblem will it bear? I have chosen an emblem for you: the Heart of Jesus, for it is to Him we must belong, and towards Him must converge all the lines of our life. I never preach a retreat without giving an instruction upon the Sacred Heart.

I will first speak to you of the advantages of this devotion, and then of the manner in which we should practice it.

Why should we embrace this devotion with all the ardor of our soul? *Because our Sav-*

ior desires it. He revealed to Blessed Margaret Mary how he longed for souls to come to Him, that he might shower upon them the treasures of His love. The providence of the Sacred Heart has overcome all obstacles opposed to the spread of this devotion. How else explain the cult of the Sacred Heart that has spread through the Church with the force and rapidity of a torrent, in spite of such bitter opposition. Why, in 1899, did Leo XIII proclaim that the reign of the Sacred Heart had begun? In these troublous times, when so many agencies labor with satanic ardor to snatch away souls, how explain the wonderful spread of this devotion? The Heart of God desires it and wishes through it to increase love for Him in the hearts of the faithful.

DEVOTION TO THE SACRED HEART AN INFALLIBLE MEANS OF GAINING HOLINESS

I have often witnessed the change of heart that takes place in worldly men during a

retreat. Many had not led edifying lives, but once they conceived a sincere devotion to the Sacred Heart, they made rapid progress in virtue, which became more apparent each time they returned to strengthen their souls with the Spiritual Exercises. I have known men who had been Freemasons and who by practicing this devotion became daily communicants and truly holy souls.

DEVOTION TO THE SACRED HEART AN EFFICACIOUS MEANS OF OBTAINING THE CONVERSION OF SINNERS

If priests and zealous lay persons spread this devotion they obtain astonishing results. When I was instructor of tertiaries, I said to my young priests: "Now that you are priests, and about to begin your Apostolic career, bear this well in mind: when you wish to convert a soul, address yourself to the Heart of Jesus through Mary Immaculate, and you will certainly succeed." A few days later a messenger came for a priest

to administer the last Sacraments to a dying man. The priest who was sent, heard in the village that an old man of ninety years lay at the point of death. He was a wicked old sinner, who swore he would kill any priest who dared to come near him. This announcement but increased the zeal of the young priest for the conversion of that soul. The curé of the parish begged him not to expose himself to danger, but the ardent young missionary did not fear death, he rather courted it, esteeming it a great honor to give his life for the salvation of a soul. He started off for the house of the dying man, which was about half a mile distant. On the way he paused a moment and said a short prayer: "Sacred Heart of Jesus, our Father Instructor tells us that in addressing Thee through Thy Immaculate Mother we can obtain the conversion of sinners. I ask this soul of Thy Sacred Heart, I ask it through Mary. Grant my prayer, I beseech Thee, O Lord!" When he came near the

house of the dying man, the neighbors came out and begged him not to enter. They really thought his life was in danger but he turned a deaf ear to their entreaties. At the sight of the priest, the old man rose up and glared fiercely at the intruder. Then suddenly softening, he said: "Come, Father, and hear my confession." The young priest had never before heard a confession; but he was not disturbed. Seating himself, he repeated the formula of benediction. The dying man had not been to confession since his first communion eighty years ago, but with the aid of the priest made a good confession, received absolution, and with deep emotion asked if he could make his second communion, which would be his last. His dispositions were such that the priest readily assented, telling him he would return in an hour to bring the Viaticum and give him Extreme Unction. The delighted neighbors prepared a triumphal reception for the Blessed Sacrament. The priest walked

over a flower-strewn path from the church to the poor cabin. The old man's conversion was sincere and complete and it was manifestly owing to a fervent and confident prayer to the Sacred Heart of Jesus through Mary Immaculate.

DEVOTION TO THE SACRED HEART PROCURES AN ASSURED REFUGE

Our souls have need of a place of repose. We long for consolation and communion with an intelligent loving heart. What better refuge can we have than the hearts of Jesus and Mary? Let us often seek them, and we shall be sheltered from all that can injure or disquiet us.

THE HEART OF JESUS STRENGTHENS LANGUID SOULS

At times, only to look upon an image of the Sacred Heart acts like the lash of a whip upon our sluggish spiritual energies. I remember upon one occasion, as I was retiring to rest exhausted after a long day of preach-

ing and hearing confessions, a carriage stopped at the door. It was a sick-call. A friend of mine was in his agony and asked me to come to him. I fear at that moment my zeal was far from ardent. However, I got up, not protesting it is true, but without due zeal. Suddenly my eyes fell upon an image of the Sacred Heart. The sight of the Cross, the Crown of Thorns, and the bleeding wounds stirred my whole being. It seemed as though our Savior said to me: "Do you not wish to devote yourself to souls for love of me?" My reply was immediate, and a moment later I was in the carriage. I passed the night beside my friend, who breathed his last in my arms. The next morning found me as rested as if I had enjoyed a long sleep. Learn to understand the lessons the Heart of Jesus teaches, and when you look upon His image, listen to what He says, and faithfully do his bidding.

DEVOTION TO THE SACRED HEART NOURISHES OTHER DEVOTIONS

Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus nourishes devotion to the Blessed Sacrament, to the Passion of Christ, to Our Lady, and the Saints. It is not possible to love the Sacred Heart truly without feeling at the same time an ardent love for the Holy Eucharist. We shall better understand the mysteries of the Passion if we consider them in the Heart of Jesus, instead of meditating upon them abstractly, for then we comprehend better the feelings that penetrated that Heart in the midst of His sufferings. As to devotion to the Blessed Virgin, the more we love the heart of the Son the greater will be our devotion to His Mother.

To enter the Heart of Jesus, one must pass through the Heart of Mary. These two hearts can never be separated; they were intimately united upon Earth, and are still more closely bound up in Heaven.

I have enumerated the principal advan-

tages of devotion to the Sacred Heart, and now I come to the *practice*. This devotion is suited to all times, to every age and condition, and to every state of soul. I especially recommend five different forms of this devotion: namely, one each day, each week, each month, each year, and for all time.

EACH DAY

Here are two prayers, one for the morning, an offering of the day to God; the other for the evening, when one closes the day in the Heart of Jesus. In these two formulas I have mentioned the Blessed Virgin and St. Joseph. Thousands of these prayers have been distributed, and I have reason to believe have accomplished much good.

MORNING PRAYER

Almighty God, I offer Thee this day in honor of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph. I unite with every action performed to-day in the entire world in honor of these three objects of my love. Would that I could

surpass all others in love, zeal, and devotion to Thee, O Heart of Jesus; to Thy Immaculate Mother and to St. Joseph.

EVENING OFFERING

O good Jesus, I place in Thy Sacred Heart, through the Immaculate Heart of Mary and the pure hands of St. Joseph and my Guardian Angel, my whole day, such as it has been with its good and evil, in order that the evil may be consumed in the fire of Thy love and the good being purified in the same fire, may become worthy to be offered to Thy Eternal Father.

EACH WEEK

It is not my intention to propose that you add anything to your Friday prayers. I only urge you to perform all your actions perfectly, thereby rendering them more agreeable to the Heart of Jesus. Be more fervent in your prayers, more faithful to rule, more exact in the discharge of your duties. I recommended the above in a retreat I once gave to a religious community

adding that what had been begun with so much zeal, I feared would be gradually neglected. A young religious undertook to dispel my fears. With the permission of his superior he wrote on a placard in large letters: "To-morrow, Friday, Father Petit's Recommendations!" Thursday evening I was still in the house. Passing through a familiar corridor, a large notice attracted my attention. I stopped, and to my great astonishment and satisfaction read the recommendations I had made in my sermon. Since then I mention this charming incident whenever I preach a retreat, and now the use of such a reminder has become common in seminaries, communities, and schools. Whenever I visit a religious community on Friday, the celebrated notice is invariably displayed. I have been told that in schools where it is in evidence, the children show a better disposition and greater zeal on Fridays. Hence you see one thus unites many advantages. First, the Blessed Sacrament

is more honored upon the day consecrated to this devotion. Then one spends Friday in greater fervor; and lastly, one is more charitable and kind to others. I always feel a great joy on Thursday evening, knowing that many souls will pass the next day in a holy manner out of devotion to the Heart of Jesus. If I awake in the night the thought of all the "reminders" hanging in seminaries, convents, and schools gives me great happiness.

Friday is the day consecrated in a particular manner to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. The Communion of Reparation, the recitation of the Litanies approved by the Pope, and an Act of Consecration, are excellent practices for this day. Thanks be to God, the devotion of the First Friday is solidly established. The Bishop of Gand told me of a manufacturing town, where 5,000 working men and women get up at dawn to go to confession and receive Holy Communion every First Friday. I believe it is due to devotion

to the Sacred Heart, and also, perhaps, for the charitable reception of banished religious, that so much courage has been manifested by the Belgian people on the school question, that our country has remained faithful to God, and that we have kept a religious government.

Each year the feast of the Sacred Heart should be celebrated in a solemn manner. But about this I have nothing special to say.

Holy zeal wishes to spread devotion to the Sacred Heart everywhere. Endeavor to practice this devotion and enkindle this divine fire in all souls, neglect no occasion or means by which to achieve this end, bearing in mind the magnificent promises made by Our Divine Savior: "Those who propagate this devotion will have their names written in my Heart, from which they will never be effaced."

NINTH INSTRUCTION

ROPES—THE ANCHOR

Many ropes are employed in handling a sailing vessel, both on the masts and sails, and each one has its own particular name according to its individual use. The ropes that bind us to God in religious life are our vows, the constitution, the rules, our duties, and the regulations of the institute.

THE VOW OF POVERTY

You know how much our Savior loved poverty. He Himself had no place to lay His head. Persecution has furnished many occasions to both priests and nuns to practice holy poverty and endure privations, and they have thanked God for it. We should cherish religious poverty as our richest treasure.

VOW OF CHASTITY

St. Ignatius says that he who makes a vow of chastity should imitate the purity of the Angels. Chastity in thought and desire; chastity of the eyes; chastity in reading; chastity in all things.

VOW OF OBEDIENCE

I have already spoken to you of the excellence of religious obedience; through it one is always sure of accomplishing God's Will. When I was choosing my vocation in life, the consideration that decided me to enter the Society of Jesus was, that in that Society obedience is the backbone and sinew of the whole religious life. Who can measure the happiness that religious obedience procures for the soul?

CONSTITUTIONS

The constitutions, if faithfully observed, are stout ropes with which we attach ourselves to God and draw ourselves up to heaven. They are founded upon the Gospel,

and consequently are filled with the Spirit of the Divine Master. Never deviate from your constitutions but guide your life according to their Spirit and laws.

RULES

By rules is meant the manner in which you should fulfill or practice your vows and the laws of the constitutions. I can apply to rules what I have said of obedience, for one is a part of the other. The faithful observance of rules binds us to God with golden chains. God holds the first ring and the last one is within our reach, it depends upon ourselves whether we grasp it or not. By each act of fidelity to rules we seize another link of the chain and thus are constantly drawn nearer to God. We can also consider our rules as golden rails upon which we travel to heaven. When faithful to rule, our locomotive travels straight over the rails, drawing behind it many coaches, which are the souls saved through our zeal.

DUTIES

Through the voice of our superior, God assigns to us our duties. Hence, they should be accepted as coming from His hands, and be discharged in the most perfect manner possible. The community counts upon us, and we in turn must show ourselves worthy of its confidence. Moreover, each one must occupy himself with his own particular work, not interfering with the duties of others, or disorder will reign. The different offices in the community can be compared to a symphony. The superior is the leader of the orchestra, and each one plays his own instrument. God listens in heaven and Jesus in the tabernacle. If all play in tune God is pleased, but should one heedless musician interrupt his neighbor: "Why are you playing *fa,* don't you see it is *re?*" You can fancy what a strange medley would then be produced. This comparison gives some idea of what transpires in a community where each one interferes with the duties of

another. The natural result is disorder and lack of harmony.

THE REGULATIONS OF THE HOUSE

I mean by this the religious exercises and ordering of the duties of the day. A community can be compared to a clock. There are many wheels in a clock both large and small, there is also the pendulum which sets the works in motion, and is itself moved by a spring. The pendulum represents the superior, the spring which puts it in motion is God Himself, whom the superior represents. Each member of the community is a wheel, large or small, according to the importance of his charge, but in God's sight all duties are of equal value, or rather what gives them importance in His eyes are the love and fidelity with which they are discharged. Each exercise must be begun and finished at precisely the hour prescribed. If a small wheel fails to turn, the clock instantly stops. Let us by way of comparison take the care of

lamps in a school. The one in charge says to himself, "I am only a little wheel, of no importance, and I am so tired I am going to rest; things will go on just as well without me." But it is winter and at five o'clock it is quite dark in the class-rooms. The pupils collide in the corridors and the little wheel sleeps sweetly on. Behold the disorder that reigns in the house, simply because one little wheel neglected its duty. May such a condition never be found in your community, and may God always see here every duty discharged at its appointed hour.

Before finishing this subject, a word must be said about rope-ladders by means of which sailors and cabin boys climb to the top-mast. For us, these rope-ladders are ejaculatory prayers. Learn to elevate your heart to God in cultivating this form of prayer, while working or going from place to place. Why not from time to time lift your eyes to heaven, give glory to God, adore Jesus in the tabernacle, salute the Vir-

gin Mary, and recommend yourself to your Guardian Angel? Your life would then be a continual prayer. St. Louis de Gonzaga was a great contemplative. In making his meditation one day he began over and over again until he succeeded in spending one hour without distractions. The meditation lasted five hours. But God rewarded him for his efforts, for from that day he had such complete mastery of his imagination that during six months all his distractions did not last the time it takes to say an *Ave Maria.* When, in 1591, Rome was visited by the pest, he nursed the plague-stricken, especially the most violent cases, and soon contracted the disease himself. His superior then forbade him to say long prayers, only permitting ejaculatory ones and short visits to the Blessed Sacrament. Cherishing obedience above all things the young Saint at once submitted. St. Magdalen of Pazzi in one of her many ecstasies saw him in God's bosom and cried out: "Oh, what

glory is that of Louis, son of St. Ignatius! Never could I imagine glory in heaven, such as I see in Louis!" She tells us furthermore that the burning aspirations of love which came from his heart were like flaming arrows going straight to the heart of God and returning to his servant in a rain of graces.

THE ANCHOR

The anchor holds the ship in position and prevents it from drifting. Our anchor is obedience, complete obedience without reserve to our superiors and all legitimate authority, especially to our confessor who, in a special manner, takes the place of God.

With regard to obedience to one's confessor, I want to enlighten and reassure those who have troubles of conscience and lack confidence. A nun greatly troubled in conscience comes to confession and opens her soul to me. I say to her: "That is sufficient. I perfectly understand the state of your soul, and will give you absolution,

which will efface all the sins of your past life. Never again refer to what you have now confessed, and think no more about it. I take the responsibility upon myself. At God's Judgment Seat, you can say: "I confessed to Father Petit, and he told me to think no more of the past." "And you obeyed?" "Yes, Lord." "It is well; I had given full power to Father Petit, you have obeyed, enter into Heaven." But soon I must appear before my Master's tribunal to be judged. My good Jesus, whom I love, will say: "Father Petit, you heard many confessions during your life. Did you always act prudently?" "Perhaps, Lord, I erred in judgment, but my intention was always pure." "You told such a Sister not to torment herself about her faults, not to think about them and yet the matter was grave." My answer is ready: "Good Master, had you been in my place, and had you seen this poor soul and the state she was in, I feel sure you would have acted as I did," and God will

reply: "You did well, Father Petit; it is good to be merciful." I enter into heaven and my poor pardoned sheep receives me joyously. Above all, have confidence; obey in all simplicity; the responsibility does not rest upon you but upon your confessor.

Keep yourself closely united to God by means of these precious ropes which bind you to Him. Ascend often to Him by the ladder of ejaculatory prayer and finally live in sweet peace, in comforting confidence in practicing precious, blessed, and divine obedience.

TENTH INSTRUCTION

THE MAST

The most prominent part of a sailing vessel is the mast. It can be compared to the spire of a church. Like the spire, it rises to heaven and seems to invite us to lift up our souls to the heights. Hence the mast represents elevated thoughts and sentiments. But in the spiritual life, if we would rise, we must first humble ourselves. Thus are we led to study that virtue which is the foundation and groundwork of all spiritual perfection, humility. Perhaps it seems strange to you that I speak of humility in connection with masts.

In order to understand humility thoroughly I shall briefly explain the meditation of St. Ignatius, called the "Two Standards," that of Lucifer and that of Christ. We

shall first consider the prince of darkness seated upon a throne of fire, spreading terror around him. He is instructing the demons, his satellites, in the means to be employed for the destruction of men's souls, in which he hates the image of God. He teaches them how to profit by man's defects, his passions, his evil inclinations, and even how to lay traps for his virtue and drag him to perdition. How many stupid, unwary people are every day caught in his meshes? How many, not satisfied with being entrapped themselves, endeavor to ruin their neighbors? Do not think that we religious have nothing to fear or that we are safe from all danger. The evil spirit labors to make us fail in humility or holy poverty.

To make clear to you Satan's methods, I shall once more speak about myself, but this time it is pure invention. However, it might well have happened to me had I not been upon my guard against the snares of the devil.

Imagine, then, that at my advanced age of ninety I had become an exquisite in my tastes and habits. One day, during my meditation, the devil whispers to me that my breviary is old and worn; I listen to him, and instead of meditating, I reason with him on the subject. Yes, the breviary is no longer fit for use, and I must really have another. But how can I manage it? Ah! there is one of my penitents, a young girl who is rich and generous; she would gladly give me a new one. I find a pretext to have her pay me a visit and I take the breviary with me to the parlor; then I find another pretext for leaving the room, and by accident my breviary remains upon the table. My visitor, a true daughter of Eve, looks through it to see the holy pictures. She observes how worn it is, and, when I return, says to me: "Your breviary is very old and worn, Father, do let me give you a new one." "My child, this one is quite good enough for me," I reply. She insists, and

I finally consent. Now, how am I to explain this to my superior and at the same time satisfy my conscience? This is the difficult part of it. Yet, here I am with a beautiful new gilt-edged breviary, and all this was but a game of vanity. I leave soon after to preach a mission and am careful to take my precious book with me. I have it much in evidence in the train so that my fellow-travelers may admire it and say, perhaps: "This priest must be somebody, most likely a Provincial of the Order." To such a humiliating pass can the demon bring us. We should blush to be so easily taken in by his wiles; but, above all, let us labor valiantly to detach our hearts from creatures and be ready at any moment to strip ourselves of everything.

Let us imagine now a smiling plain near Jerusalem, and our Savior, not upon a throne like Satan, but humbly seated in the midst of his faithful servants. He teaches them humility by word and example, wish-

ing them to realize that true happiness lies in poverty, humility, and suffering. In Lucifer's camp one is taught to seek the first place and to dominate others, but here all is abasement and humility. Try to learn thoroughly these lessons of our Divine Master and practice them with joy!

St. Augustine defines humility thus: The love of God pushed to contempt of self and pride, he says, is love of self pushed to contempt of God. St. Ignatius, taking this definition as a foundation, defines three degrees of humility. In every retreat I give, I speak of these three degrees, and usually I am perfectly understood, even by the youngest listener.

FIRST DEGREE

The first degree consists in being ready to die or to suffer everything rather than commit a mortal sin. This disposition is absolutely necessary for salvation, but being convinced that you all are so disposed, I shall

say no more. To be in the same dispositions with regard to deliberate venial sins is the more perfect state, yet many souls have arrived at this degree, and I know you also are in this class. Ask God to strengthen and keep you in this holy state.

THIRD DEGREE

This degree is a little more complicated; one can easily get false ideas about it; but there is no real difficulty. Listen well to what I am about to say: on one side I put riches, honors, and pleasures; on the other suffering, humiliations, and privations. If asked to choose between the two, I must first know which choice will give greater glory to God. I am told the glory is equal in either case. Then I chose humiliation and suffering, and why? Because my Master suffered and was humiliated. I want to love what He loved, and choose what he chose, since love seeks ever to resemble the object beloved. Have I made my point quite clear?

The glory to God being equal, to choose for love of Him poverty, humility, and the Cross, is the third degree of humility. We feel the repugnance nature has for this degree of sacrifice; nevertheless, we must strive for this high state of perfection and ask Our Lord to establish us in the third degree of humility.

The strong arm of this degree is silence, that "triumphant silence" spoken of by St. Ambrose, who uses this expression in speaking of our Savior being buffeted, falsely accused, and condemned, and not replying to his accusers: *"Jesus autem tacebat."* St. Augustine expresses the same idea when he says: He defended Himself against the snares of His enemies by being silent: *"Contra dolos inimicorum dimicavit tacendo."*

The venerable Father Lancicius relates the following edifying anecdote of a lay brother of the Society of Jesus. Brother de Montoy was a rich and brilliant young

man, who had taken degrees in philosophy and belles lettres. Notwithstanding, he applied for admission as a lay brother. The provincial felt constrained to accept this act of humility. De Montoy made his novitiate with the other brothers and shared their occupations for many years. He was, at one time, porter of a college where a new rector had just been appointed. The latter, returning one day at the hour when the religious make their spiritual reading in the Imitation of Christ, was surprised to see a Latin edition of à Kempis' book in the porter's hands. His astonishment was so great he seized the book, saying: "Proud man that you are, you wish to make the visitors who come to the college think you know Latin. I doubt if you even know English. Hand over your keys, go to the kitchen, and wash dishes, which will be your occupation in the future." The humble religious obeyed cheerfully and fulfilled this duty for ten years without ever complaining. How

true it is that when we keep silence for love of God, God speaks for us. One day, one of the Fathers going into the kitchen, was surprised to find this brother at his humble occupation and asked him why he had been punished. The good religious laughingly related the episode of the Latin book. The Father went directly to the rector and said: "Father Rector, Brother de Montoy is a better Latin scholar than either you or I. It was through humility that he did not defend himself." The Rector wrote at once to the Provincial: "I have just discovered a real pearl in my house; let this example of humility be known for the greater glory of God and the salvation of souls." The Provincial was charmed at the proposition. Brother de Montoy was summoned and ordered to study theology and prepare for the priesthood. He obeyed and became an admirable missionary.

In concluding this meditation I ask you to make here and now three resolutions:

First, to protest to God that you would rather die and suffer every torment than commit a single mortal sin; secondly, to promise the same with regard to deliberate venial sins; and thirdly, to tell Jesus that, with the help of His grace, you will rise to the third degree of humility and that, at the present moment at least, you are disposed to prefer humiliations to honors, privations to ease and comfort, in order to resemble Jesus Christ more closely.

ELEVENTH INSTRUCTION

STEAM—FERVOR

Sails and oars are no longer the only means by which a vessel can be propelled; they have been superseded by something more powerful—steam. Ships now travel with greater rapidity, and steam is considered a surer means of navigation. Happily, my dear children, we have the same advantage in the spiritual life, or rather, a more precious one. Steam symbolizes fervor; their effects are strikingly analogous, as you will see later on. Were we animated with a spirit of true fervor, we should make rapid strides in perfection and escape all risks of shipwreck. This fact induces me to speak to you of this precious disposition, which lifts all the virtues to the highest plane of perfection.

We shall consider in turn the four follow-

ing points: What must be the dispositions of a soul before it can be called fervent? What effect does fervor produce in the soul? What are the means that must be employed to keep up fervor? And lastly, what are the motives for being fervent?

The fervent Christian does all things with a pure intention. If he speaks it is that God may be glorified, and his neighbor edified. In all his actions he so conducts himself that all the glory will be given to God. The device of St. Ignatius: "All for the Glory of God," is his inspiration.

Again, the fervent Christian gives himself completely to the duty of the moment, nor is the duty performed in a half-hearted manner, merely because it is an obligation; no, it is done wholeheartedly and completely.

The fervent Christian acts as if God were visibly present and witnessed all his actions; he avoids all that could possibly be offensive in God's sight, sin especially, however small it may be.

The fervent Christian, when he has once undertaken a duty, is not deterred by difficulties but generously applies himself to surmount them. "What can separate me from the charity of Christ." (Rom. VIII, 35.)

The fervent Christian never leaves his work until it is completed, persevering in spite of fatigue and distaste. He knows and practices the maxim of St. Francis of Sales: *"Usque ad finem,"* To the very end.

The fervent Christian seizes with avidity all occasions for sanctifying himself, employing the means recommended by the masters of the spiritual life, such as the Sacraments, retreats, recollection, the way of the cross, visits to the Blessed Sacrament, and reading the lives of the saints.

The fervent Christian manifests his love of God by being zealous in trifles. It is no small matter to be faithful in little things. What difficulties must be surmounted, what human respect crushed under foot if we would be perfect in small things.

The fervent Christian applies himself to accomplish the will of God in all things and, following the example of our Lord, is never satiated with that Divine Will. *"Meus cibus est, ut faciam voluntatem ejus qui misit me"* (John, IV, 34), and, in the words of the Psalmist, *"In mandatis ejus volet nimis"* (Ps. CXI, 1).

Finally, the fervent Christian is never weary of work, on the contrary the more he labors and suffers, the greater is his desire to labor and suffer even more. "The fire never saith: It is enough." (Prov. XXX, 16). Like St. Francis Xavier, the fervent soul cries out: *"Amplius, Domine, Amplius!"*

Now let us examine the direct effects of fervor. In order to make this quite clear, allow me to use a familiar comparison. Imagine a saucepan filled with cold water. This water is motionless, gives forth no vapor, chills the immediate surrounding atmosphere, and in its present state is useless

in the preparation of food that requires cooking. But put that saucepan over the fire and the effect the fire produces on the water can be likened to the operation of fervor in the soul.

Scarcely is the water subject to the action of fire, than it loses its immobility; it becomes more and more agitated as the temperature increases, and once boiling, throws all the impurities it contains to the surface. Moreover, it radiates a warmth that animates and affects surrounding objects. Hence, it is by the action of the fire that water is transformed into an element capable of cooking food. In our day Science has taught us how to transform steam into motive-power, and from one end of the world to another trains and gigantic ships now attain great speed through the action of steam.

Now you see the admirable correspondence between the action of fire upon water and the effects of fervor in the soul!

Fervor preserves the soul from stagna-

tion, in which tepid souls languish. Take for example a gifted, cultivated woman, occupying an influential position in society, who does scarcely anything for the salvation of souls. How are we to explain this except on the assumption that she is either cold or tepid. But excite fervor in her soul, and immediately all her faculties will be used in the service of God. She will devote herself to useful things and fruitful works of zeal. Such is the first effect of *fervor;—work that is profitable to the soul.*

Fervor burns up the impurities that tepidity engenders. In the same measure as a soul becomes fervent, she conceives within herself a horror of sin and all that approaches it. The second effect of fervor is *a delicate conscience and hatred of sin.* Fervor produces holy aspirations, which transport the soul to heaven. These holy aspirations, and the desires they evoke, mount like flames to the throne of God. The third effect of fervor is *holy desires.*

Fervor that burns and consumes the soul betrays itself outwardly and is felt by others. The fourth effect of fervor is *edification of our neighbors.*

Fervor renders a soul capable, so to speak, of preparing spiritual food that is easily assimilated; such spiritual food are exercises of piety, communion, meditation, sermons, etc. From all these the fervent soul draws health and joy. Such is the fifth effect of fervor, *efficacy of spiritual exercises.*

But its principal effect is the singular strength with which it invests the soul, enabling it to organize good works and vigorously promote the Divine Glory through the sanctification of souls. Examine closely the great Catholic charities; they are all the work of fervent souls. It is to their fervor that St. Vincent de Paul, St. Ignatius Loyola, St. Alphonsus, owe their gigantic works of charity, piety, and zeal. The fervor of the Curé d'Ars wrought wonderful conversions.

What am I, O my Jesus? Am I a truly fervent soul? I will endeavor to labor more valiantly to accomplish more, and extend my work, so that my life may be fruitful and happy.

HOW WE ARE TO NURTURE FERVOR

We should begin by taking up one thing and performing it with fervor. We read in the life of Francis Suarez that he was often seen in a state of ecstasy, suspended in the air during his prayers. Fidelity to his morning meditation, doubtless brought him to this high degree of fervor. It is related of him also that, being asked upon one occasion to choose between the prayers prescribed by the rule and all the knowledge he had acquired, he unhesitatingly declared his willingness to sacrifice his store of learning rather than be deprived of his prayers.

Faithful observance of the daily regulations is a second means. It is of particular importance to rise at a fixed hour. We are

so often tempted to fail in this respect. We have always so many excuses to offer: either we are tired; or we were up late; or it is too cold. Idleness, sensuality, and the devil, all take a hand in the argument. The generous soul will scorn such excuses and energetically conquer self. It is, however, not possible to rise at a fixed hour unless one has also a fixed hour for retiring. Doctors agree that it is far more healthy to go to bed early and get up early than to retire late and sleep late in the morning.

The third means is recollection. Happy the man who habitually and daily retires into himself, examines his conscience and purifies it by a good act of contrition, joined to a firm purpose of amendment. Weekly recollection consists in going at certain hours to visit the Blessed Sacrament, or to the oratory of the Blessed Virgin, and after passing in review the events of the week, to take a firm resolution to improve upon some one point during the following week.

Then there is the monthly recollection, during which we assure ourselves that we are faithful to the resolutions taken during the retreat and are always ready to appear before God.

During the annual retreat we endeavor to understand the workings of our spiritual life; we strike the balance between our gains and losses with the intention of repairing the past, regulating the present, and preparing the future.

And finally, we must begin every spiritual exercise well, not precipitately, but quietly with a recollected soul, pausing longer upon the first words.

WHY BE FERVENT?

First, because life is short. We live but once and for a short time, and upon this one short life depends our eternity. Could the Saints return to earth, they would certainly lead a more fervent life. It is not a light matter to acquire or lose one single degree of eternal glory through lack of fervor.

Second, because fervor renders all things easy, lightens all burdens, and thus procures for us joy and happiness. A meditation that is difficult for a tepid soul delights the fervent one.

The third motive is Apostolic zeal. Having studied the effects of fervor, it is evident what an immense superiority a fervent soul has over a tepid one in the work of saving souls.

The fourth motive is that we are in the service of God, *Spiritu ferventes,* says St. Paul, *Domino servientes.* In the service of man negligence might perhaps be overlooked; but it is the Sovereign Master, our God, whom we serve. He is our heavenly Father, our supreme and eternal benefactor, our incomparable friend. From Him we receive all things which in His infinite goodness he provides for us. In return for our fervor He promises us an eternal reward, in exchange for light labor assures us glory without end.

TWELFTH INSTRUCTION

STORES—FRESH WATER

Our little ship is nearly equipped; and now we must provision it for the voyage, and take on board a supply of fresh water. Holy Communion is the food of the soul. Our Holy Father Pius X has clearly defined the doctrine of the Eucharist, and indicated our duty in this regard. There is nothing to add to his pronouncements. The Heart of Jesus desires that all should have daily access to the Holy Table, and all Christians should consider it an honor to approach the divine banquet. If we would draw profit from this grace, for which we can never be sufficiently thankful, we must cultivate the right kind of devotion. The best preparation is to live in such a manner that all our

actions tend to the worthy reception of Holy Communion.

Besides provisions, fresh water is an absolute necessity for those who travel by sea. What, for us, is this fresh water? It is nothing else than what our Savior desired for His disciples after His resurrection when he saluted them three times with the words: *"Pax vobis"*—Peace be unto you. Peace, that is the fresh water we must have on board our vessel. How great should be our appreciation of this gift of God! The Savior is born at Bethlehem, and immediately His Angels announce "glory to God on high and peace on earth to men of good will." The Church in turn wishes us peace and often asks for it. The priest at the altar, holding in his hands a particle of the Host, makes the Sign of the Cross over the chalice and pronounces the words: *"Pax Domini sit semper vobiscum*—May the peace of Christ be always with you." Let me say in passing, that when I pronounce these

words, I shall always have the intention of asking peace for you who are listening to me now, and for all the members of your congregation. The priest again invokes three times the Lamb of God, and finishes with these words: "*Dona nobis pacem,* Give us peace." The Church tells us how necessary peace is and with what care we should guard it. But in what does this peace consist? St. Augustine tells us that it is composed of four elements: Peace is serenity of spirit; it is tranquillity of soul; it is simplicity of heart; it is the bond of love. We shall examine these different points.

SERENITY OF SPIRIT

Our spirit may be compared to the sky, which is sometimes serene, and again heavy with clouds. Many clouds may pass over our spirit and disturb our serenity; these are the vain and dangerous thoughts suggested by the devil to make us fall into sin. Remember what I have said with regard to

your conduct under such circumstances. Make an act of charity and despise the suggestions of the enemy of your soul.

TRANQUILLITY OF SOUL

Thoughts about the past, present, and future often trouble the soul. As to the past, it is the remembrance of our sins that worries us. But, after a good confession, what reason have we to be disturbed? Cast your entire past, such as it is, with all confidence into the merciful Heart of our God. A convert of Father de Ravignan came to him one day to say she was greatly troubled about an unworthy general confession she had made to him, although at the time it was made with the best dispositions. "Madame," he replied, "all that is drowned in the divine mercy of God, think no more about it." Nothing is truer, for through absolution all your sins are cast into the infinite ocean of the heart of Jesus, and the heavy ones sink more quickly. But you will

say to me: "But have I explained this sin sufficiently, have I not forgotten that?" Behold Satan's ruse to torment you and arrest your progress in divine love. What would you say of a person who, after having thrown a heavy package into the sea, would say: "I have perhaps forgotten something, I must get it back to make sure?" How absurd that would be! Leave the past in peace and abandon yourself to God.

With regard to the present, he who would have peace must be faithful to the duty of the moment. Do not bother about the past, it does not belong to you; nor about the future, which is unknown. There is an appropriate maxim which says: "*Age quod agis*—Do now what the moment requires." Yes, do what God asks of you now and nothing else, and do it to the best of your ability. This alone can give peace. Suppose I am sitting in my room and the bell rings for the midday examination of conscience. I prepare to make it, since it is the duty of the

moment. Just then someone enters with a newspaper. The temptation is strong to look at it. I say to myself: "I will only see if there is anything about church matters." If I yield, after reading the first paragraph, I shall read the second and the third. The Angelus rings, my examination is not made, I am not satisfied with myself, neither am I at peace, because I have failed in my duty; and so it will always be. Let duty go before pleasure. Work, do not loiter or lose time, and you will have peace.

The future also can be a source of trouble and anxiety. There are people who live in the future, who, in imagination, delight to create conditions in which they will serve God and taste of perfect happiness. "If I were in such a place," they will say, "or if I had such a superior . . ." Renounce all such cares. God, who is the best of fathers, watches over us. Confide in His sweet Providence.

Simplicity of heart spells frankness, sin-

cerity, and loyalty in all things. The man of simple heart is not two-faced, nor has he two ways of speaking, for his life is directed by reason and faith. This is a great source of tranquillity.

By the bond of love we mean mutual charity. Where charity is not, neither will peace abide. I know, and I thank God for it, that charity reigns in your midst. Continue to practice your rule scrupulously in this regard. In the same way, through your vow of chastity, you should be angels of purity, and through your fervor as angels of piety, be also angels of charity. Then will your community be a paradise on earth.

There remains yet one last thing to finish the equipment of our ship: to attach to the mast the streamer bearing the words *"Daughters of the Blessed Virgin."* These words will be an eloquent reminder of what you must and always should be: Daughters of the Blessed Virgin, that is to say, strong, superior women. Holy Scripture enumer-

ates the qualities of the valiant woman, and these qualities should be your distinguishing badge. Daughters of the Blessed Virgin should be angels of purity, of devotion, and all virtue. Daughter of the Blessed Virgin means especially a woman strong in adversity. Mary stood at the foot of the Cross, and like the Mother, the daughter also must stand at the foot of the Cross, courageous in suffering, strong under the weight of sorrow.

Our ship is now ready to take to sea, but for such a long voyage we shall want companions. I have chosen a few and shall present them to you in the following instruction.

THIRTEENTH INSTRUCTION

FELLOW-PASSENGERS

To-morrow your ship will weigh anchor and begin its yearly cruise. You cannot, however, make this voyage alone, so I have chosen a few companions for you. There is first our good Jesus, who never leaves you, but watches over you night and day. He will be constantly with you and ready to succor you in every danger. Where the Son is, there also is His Mother; Mary is always with Jesus, and as she is also your Mother she will want to be in the midst of her children, and lastly, where the Son and Mother are, there also will you find the husband and foster-father. Jesus, Mary, and Joseph will accompany you. How happy you should be to travel with such amiable and powerful companions.

When people travel together they begin by making their mutual acquaintance, they must know and understand one another if they are to agree. We should endeavor to learn what manner of life our companions lead, what is their work, their occupation, what difficulties they have in life, in what their pleasures and joys consist, etc. Moreover, we must examine ourselves to see if we in any way resemble our celestial companions.

What were Jesus, Mary, and Joseph in the eyes of men? Only a modest little family in an obscure village, of which the prophet had said: "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" St. Joseph was a plain workingman, who labored to support his family. But to the angels he was the spouse of the Queen of Heaven, the foster-father of Jesus, the guardian of the Word Incarnate, and the depository of divine secrets.

In the eyes of men the Blessed Virgin was a simple wife and mother, good and amiable,

but nothing more. To the angels she is the *chef d'œuvre* in which the Almighty united all perfections. She is a miracle of wisdom, power, and divine love. "The greatness and nobility of Mary are such," says St. Peter Chrysologus, "that in no other creature can we so clearly see reflected the greatness of God." Mary is the Mother of God, and this title infinitely exalts her above her fellow-creatures. The Angelic Doctor says: "The Blessed Virgin, by reason of being the Mother of God, is clothed in infinite dignity, hence it is impossible to produce a more perfect being, and nothing more perfect save God exists."

And who was the Infant Jesus? A child loved for his amiability and sweetness, but at most an ordinary child. To the angels He is the only-begotten Son of God. St. Paul in his Epistles to the Colossians says: "In Him dwells all the plenitude of the divinity." Hence, to Him all glory, praise, and adoration.

What are we in the opinion of men? Men and women of small importance. But to the angels we are a portion of the chosen flock of Christ, the special object of His love. Let us try in this respect to resemble the Holy Family.

What was the occupation of the Holy Family? What did they do? In the eyes of men very little. St. Joseph worked with a plane and saw and made furniture. The Blessed Virgin kept the house and carried water from a well that still exists. Jesus helped His parents like other children of his age. But the angels knew that St. Joseph fulfilled a sublime mission in working for the Infant God and His Mother. He thus coöperated in the salvation of the world. Mary likewise did the will of God and fulfilled a sublime mission. She gave us a Savior and nourished the victim she was later to offer for us on Calvary. Our Lord obeyed His parents and gave us an example of all virtues, beginning in this way

to accomplish the work of the redemption. And we—what do we do? Some men condemn what they call our idleness if they chance to see us in the street. But the angels know we are doing the will of God, fulfilling a sublime mission in laboring for the salvation of souls.

Did the Holy Family suffer? Yes, in certain respects. They were never seen in noisy gatherings, or taking part in worldly pleasures. No doubt men said: "What a dull and joyless life they lead!" But they were deceived in this; nor do they suspect the real sufferings and painful trials these three holy persons endured. What anguish for St. Joseph, ignorant of the Mystery of the Incarnation, when he feels he must separate himself from Mary, and what overwhelming sorrow for Mary, faithful depository of the Divine Secret! Again, what anxiety when Joseph found every door closed against him in Bethlehem, and had only a lowly stable to offer Jesus and Mary!

What an anxiety when he fled from the wrath of Herod; what anguish when he and Mary lost Jesus at Jerusalem! Perhaps our Lord then thought of the separation that religious life would entail upon the family and desired to merit for parents and children the grace to make the sacrifice demanded by God. Lastly, Mary shared the sorrows of the Passion and thus merited the title of Queen of Martyrs. We also have our trials and sufferings. Men pity us because we have renounced the pleasures of the world, imagining that outside of those pleasures there is no real happiness. But there are without doubt hidden martyrs in communities who are known to God alone. It must be so, since our Redeemer suffered, and those who belong to Him must suffer also.

JOYS OF THE HOLY FAMILY

Men imagined that their lives were dull, but the angels knew how great was their joy. Jesus, Mary, and Joseph had peace of con-

science in a supreme degree, and what happiness to live always in the friendship of God! They were certain from morning until night of doing God's will, which is another source of joy, and they formed a most amiable family.

They loved one another with the purest love, consoled one another in trials and discoursed most agreeably in their leisure hours. What is easier for us than to taste these same joys? We can have peace of conscience if we will. In being faithful to obedience we are sure of doing God's will, and if true charity,—the charity that is self-sacrificing, compassionate, and tender—reigns in our midst, we shall know the only true happiness to be found on this earth. We, like Mary and Joseph, enjoy the presence of God. He is there in the tabernacle with His irresistible charm, power, and infinite love. He thinks of us and provides for all our needs and preserves us from all perils of soul and body. I remember a

dreadful storm that lasted twenty-four hours. It shook the house and all feared we were doomed to destruction. I felt no uneasiness. My room was near the chapel, and never before did I feel so strongly the real presence of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. He is Master of the elements and of life and death. What have I to fear when He is near? Believe firmly that Jesus watches over you and learn to appreciate the ineffable joy of living under the same roof with Him. When you awaken during the night, offer Him your heart, saying, "Good Jesus, bless my sleep," and you will peacefully fall asleep again. Having studied the Holy Family, we have the satisfaction of seeing in ourselves some points of resemblance with each member of it. But is this resemblance perfect? We must examine ourselves to see in what we fail, and neglect no means or effort to render ourselves worthy of this august company.

FOURTEENTH INSTRUCTION

OTHER TRAVELING COMPANIONS

I want to speak to you of still other traveling companions, whose presence you did not perhaps expect. You will, however, be very grateful for their company, for they will prove a strong aid in many difficult hours which you may be called upon to live through. They have wings, and at the least danger will fly to your assistance. You will now understand that these companions are the angels. They will never be in the way, since they are spirits who hover around the vessel and follow in its wake. What a lovely sight! Could we but see them!

And now, we must make the acquaintance of our new companions. Having Jesus, Mary, and Joseph on board, we also have St. Gabriel, the Guardian Angel of the Holy

Family. It is well to have also St. Michael, the head of the celestial hosts, he who has fought and vanquished such powerful enemies. St. Raphael will be our guide, as he was to the young Tobias. We take with us the altar, the tabernacle, the holy table and Calvary, and these require the presence of a vast number of blessed spirits. Night and day the angels adore before the tabernacle, some surround the altar when the priest offers the Divine Victim; and those who followed the Savior along the way of the Cross will be with us to remind us of His sufferings. And let us not forget the good angel to whose care God has especially confided us, and whom we call our Guardian Angel. He will be at our side and never for one instant lose sight of us.

You must know something more of these celestial spirits. I shall try to describe to you their nature, habits, occupations, in a word the principal prerogatives by which they are distinguished. This will constitute

the first part of my instruction; in the second part I shall speak of the help they give us.

THE PREROGATIVES OF THE ANGELS

Their first prerogative is beauty. Angels are pure spirits, sublime images of the divine perfections. Nothing here below can give us the faintest idea of their transcendent beauty. God wishes our souls to partake of and resemble the beauty of the angels, which for us admits of four different degrees, namely: exemption from mortal sin, from deliberate venial sin, from involuntary venial sins, and from voluntary imperfections. Souls that arrive at this degree of perfection are very pleasing to God. Their works are specially blessed and productive of great good. We all possess the means of constantly increasing the beauty and purity of our souls.

THE BEATIFIC VISION

Pure souls have a faint glimpse of the Beatific Vision already in this life, for they

often see God as through a transparent veil. The angels unceasingly contemplate the Divine Majesty, but we also have our hours of contemplation and meditation. Do we value these holy exercises sufficiently? The great theologian, Suarez, said that he would rather lose all his learning than neglect a single hour of meditation. This dictum astonished me at first, but I soon saw how right he was. Our meditation would be more profitable and have greater attraction for us if we would make it with great simplicity and frequent colloquies. An example will make this clear to you. When I was preparing for my examinations, seventy years ago, I was obliged to rise before daylight. It was not so easy a thing then, as it is now, to procure a light. With a flint and stone I got a spark to light my lamp. I had but to strike the stone to enjoy the use of a light. Let us apply this to meditation. Making reflections during prayer is to get a spark. The spark once obtained, however, cease all effort and

converse with God, the Blessed Virgin and the Saints; speak to them of all your affairs; ask with confidence for what you need. I am often confronted with difficult questions, sometime of a nature that debars me from asking advice of others. In such cases I await with impatience the hour of meditation, when I make the affair in question the subject of my meditation and speak to God and the Blessed Virgin about it as if I saw them. I explain my difficulties and ask what decision I should make. I discuss with them the pros and cons, and at the end of the meditation I see the way quite clearly and know what I must do. Often it is quite the opposite of what I had first decided with myself. Above all, act with great simplicity with our sovereign Master and the Celestial Court; make known to them your needs and anxieties. Our miseries are not unknown to them, but they act as did the risen Christ with the disciples at Emmaus. He wished to hear from their own lips the tale of their

sufferings. On Saturday, I often ask the Blessed Virgin to tell me if I have spent a good week: "My good Mother, are you satisfied with me?" I do not say that I hear her reply, but I know and feel what she thinks and am conscious of her reproaches. I show her the unanswered letters on my writing table and she orders me to reply to them as soon as possible. She is a good Mother, but she does not spoil her children. We are not simple enough in our piety. Nor do we live intimately enough with our Savior. What I say applies particularly to Holy Communion. We have Jesus there with us and can plunge our hands into the treasure-box of His graces; we have within us His sacred body, His five wounds, and especially the wound in His heart, which can heal all the maladies of the soul. I do not mean by this, sensible devotion, but the solid devotion of faith and confidence.

ANGELS' WINGS

Angels are represented with wings to symbolize the promptitude with which they go from place to place executing the will of God. We must resemble them in this respect, that is, we must fly to fulfill promptly and punctually the orders imposed by obedience.

Numerous and indisputable facts attest that the angels help us in our needs. We have been specially confided to our Guardian Angel's care and protection. How tenderly he has watched over us since the moment of our birth; and how often, unknown to us, has he preserved us from dangers that threatened both soul and body. Do we often think of him or ask his protection in many difficult circumstances? Even in trifling things we should ask the help of the holy Angels. I could tell you many traits of my Guardian Angel, to whom I have frequent recourse. You will, perhaps, smile at my simplicity, but allow me to relate an experi-

ence that will make you understand the confidence I place in my Guardian Angel.

One day I was sent for by a lady who lived not far from the college. Her husband, whom I had known, had just died. His life had been very edifying, and shortly before his death, which was entirely unexpected, he told me that, much as he loved his wife and children, he was willing to leave them if God asked the sacrifice of his life, rather than commit a single venial sin. Shortly afterwards, this lady asked me to bless her château. As it was not far distant I went. After a short railway journey, while driving to the château, I suddenly thought: "Have I money enough for my return ticket!" A thorough search revealed that my pockets were empty. What was I to do? I felt ashamed to ask my hostess for the price of the ticket for such a short journey, but I was not ashamed to ask my Guardian Angel to inspire the lady with the idea of giving me the sum needed. Having

confidence in my faithful Guardian, I began to read my breviary and thought no more about the ticket. Upon arriving, I was ushered into the drawing-room, where several people were assembled. After greetings had been exchanged, my hostess asked me to come with her into an adjoining room, where she gave me the price of my railway fare. My good angel proved himself worthy of my confidence. The angels are happy to aid us even in the smallest affairs, but alas! we fail in simplicity and confidence.

Now that we have made the acquaintance of our traveling companions, and since all is in readiness, we shall weigh anchor. Having fulfilled my mission I shall take leave of you, but before I go I want to tell you that this retreat has been beneficial to my own soul; it has consoled, strengthened and encouraged me. I have had new ideas and conceptions. God has inspired me with the counsels I have given you. Before leaving, I ask one favor. It is this: make

a little reflection every Sunday upon the resolutions inspired by this retreat. Five minutes will suffice, but be faithful in keeping up the practice. By this means you will be able to go through the year without injury to your soul. It now only remains for me to tell you of the star that will be your guide.

FIFTEENTH INSTRUCTION

THE STAR OF THE SEA

Your ship is now peacefully riding the waves, with every hope of safely reaching port. Indulge in no illusions, however, because many and unexpected dangers may overtake you at any moment. I have spoken to you at length of tempests, collisions, reefs, and other causes that delay or shipwreck vessels. But you have nothing to fear if you follow the advice of St. Bernard and lift up your hearts to her whom we love to call the Star of the Sea—*Maris Stella.* The Holy Doctor says: "However much you may be tossed about upon the sea of the world, look at the Star and invoke Mary." (*Respice Stellam, voca Mariam.*) So long as you invoke her, you need not despair. Under her protection there are no dangers

to fear. Strengthened by her, you will not falter but will arrive safely at the port of salvation.

Fix your eyes upon Mary, this admirable Virgin, of whom St. John says in the Apocalypse: "I see a woman clothed with the sun, the moon is beneath her feet and a crown of twelve stars is upon her brow."

What signifies the moon beneath her feet? That orb of perpetual vicissitudes represents the instability of mundane things, the frivolity of the world that Mary trampled upon, caring only for the things of true worth, for celestial joys, with which she is now filled. Labor to detach your heart more and more from the nothingness of this world, which can never satisfy your aspirations and desires.

The Queen of Heaven is clothed with the Sun. She is spoken of in the Scripture as the Sun of Justice, daughter of God the Father, Mother of God the Son, Spouse of the Holy Ghost. She is enveloped by the divin-

ity of her Divine Son. She loves as He loves, she prays and suffers as He prayed and suffered. Her thoughts, sentiments, and judgments, her words and actions, are the reflection of His. Like Mary, be clothed in Jesus Christ, reproducing in your life His sentiments and acts.

The Blessed Virgin is crowned with twelve stars. These stars represent the virtues which she practiced, the number twelve signifying their universality. In fact all the virtues shine with incomparable splendor in Mary. We admire the heroic example she has given us, but we must do more and make generous efforts to follow in her footsteps. Daughters should imitate the virtues of their mother: aim to be patient, pure, pious and courageous, in a word, labor to acquire solid virtue, and now, my dear, good sisters, farewell until next year—perhaps. Shall we meet again? God alone knows. Before leaving, I confide you to the loving care of our good Mother, to

whom I pray for you. Our Lord is near you in the tabernacle. His Mother is perhaps also there this evening, and surely she hears me in heaven. Holy Mother, I came here three days ago filled with love and good-will. Thou hast seen these good sisters every day in this little chapel, where we are so near to our Lord that in a way we see Him in the tabernacle. Thou knowest with what attention, respect, and docility they have listened to these Instructions. Thou hast seen them silent, recollected, and attentive to the voice of God. Thou knowest, my good Mother, that I wished to imitate thy divine Son in making use of a comparison that has furnished us the means of studying, during these days, many things profitable for their souls. Thou knowest also that I love these souls and that this community is very dear to me. Every day at Mass, at that solemn moment when the priest says *"Pax Domini sit semper vobiscum,"* when I hold in my hands the sacred body of my God, I will ask,

as I have promised, that peace be given to each sister in this community, which is under thy protection. They are thy daughters through their constitutions and the end for which they labor, their lives are edifying and thou knowest how they labor for souls. Now that I am leaving, I confide them to thy care. Cover them as a community and as individuals with thy mantle, and obtain for each one at the end of this retreat the grace to attain and remain at the third degree of humility. When Saint Mary Magdalen of Pazzi asked thee for humility, thou didst tell her to learn it from St. Ignatius, who has so luminously explained this virtue. I ask for the eternal salvation of each one of these dear sisters, that not one may be lost, and I feel thou wilt hear my prayer. I pray that they may be generous, that they may obtain sanctity in their different ways, that they may all respond perfectly to God's designs upon them, and that they and all the members of their

respective families may be saved. I am asking much, but am sure of obtaining all I ask from thy bounty. Good Mother, in leaving them, I recommend them to thy care. Do not abandon them; console, encourage, strengthen, and instruct them. Thou knowest so well thy Son's teaching and what He demands of each one of them. Conduct them to that Divine Master, who will take them to the Eternal Father, before whose throne they will enjoy with thee the eternal felicity their works and virtues have merited. AMEN.

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PETIT, ADOLPHE, S.J.

AUTHOR

My Bark: A Souvenir of Retreats

TITLE

DATE LOANED	BORROWER'S NAME	ROOM NUMBER
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	Marshall SEP 26	
	Nevins JUL 2	
	" OCT 14	
	Hagerman Nov	
	Fr Ralphy Bellarmine	
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